



THORCAL

Child of the Stars

ROSINSKI - VAN HAMME

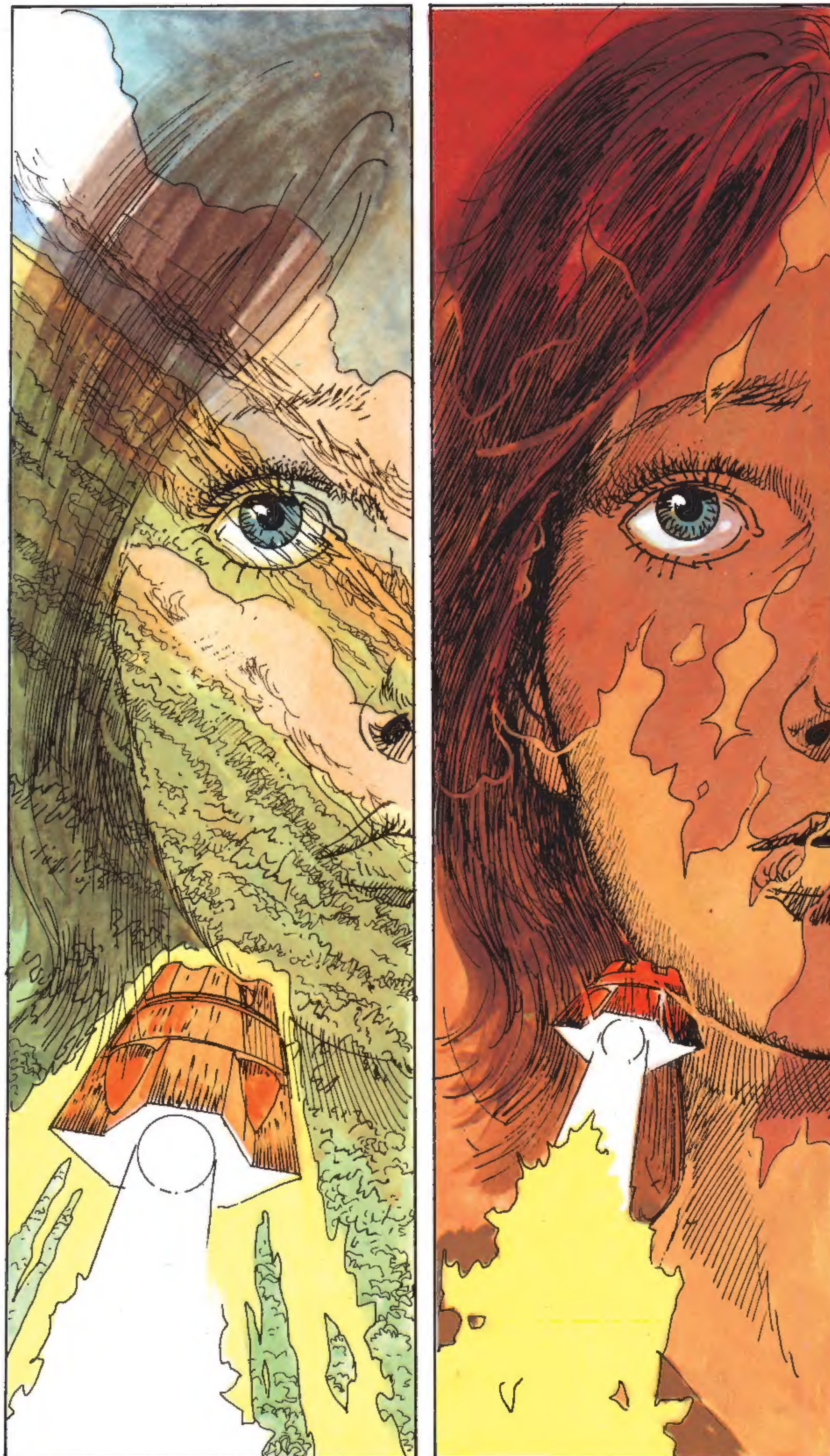


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ROSINSKI-VAN HAMME

THORNGAL

Child of the Stars



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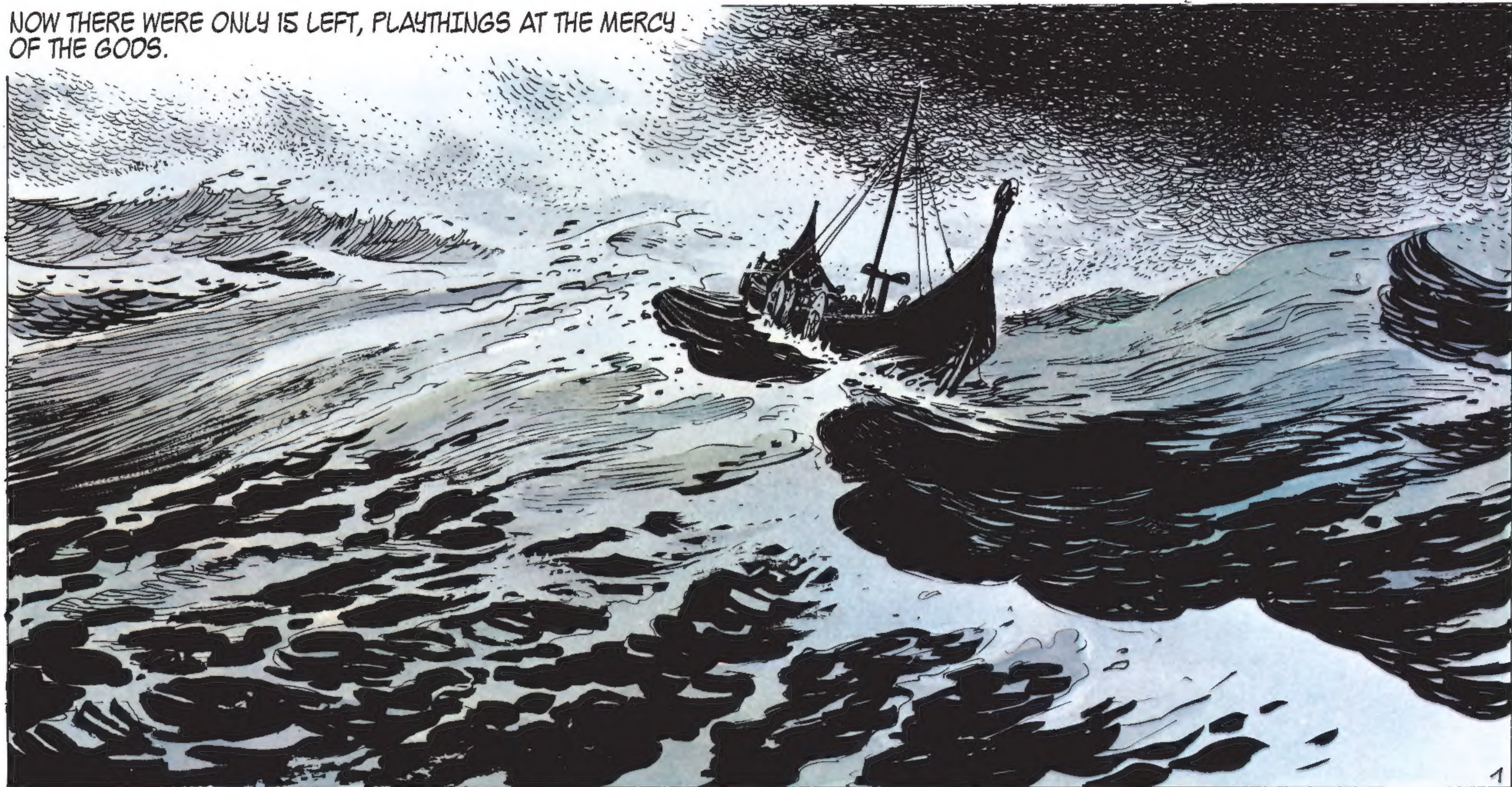


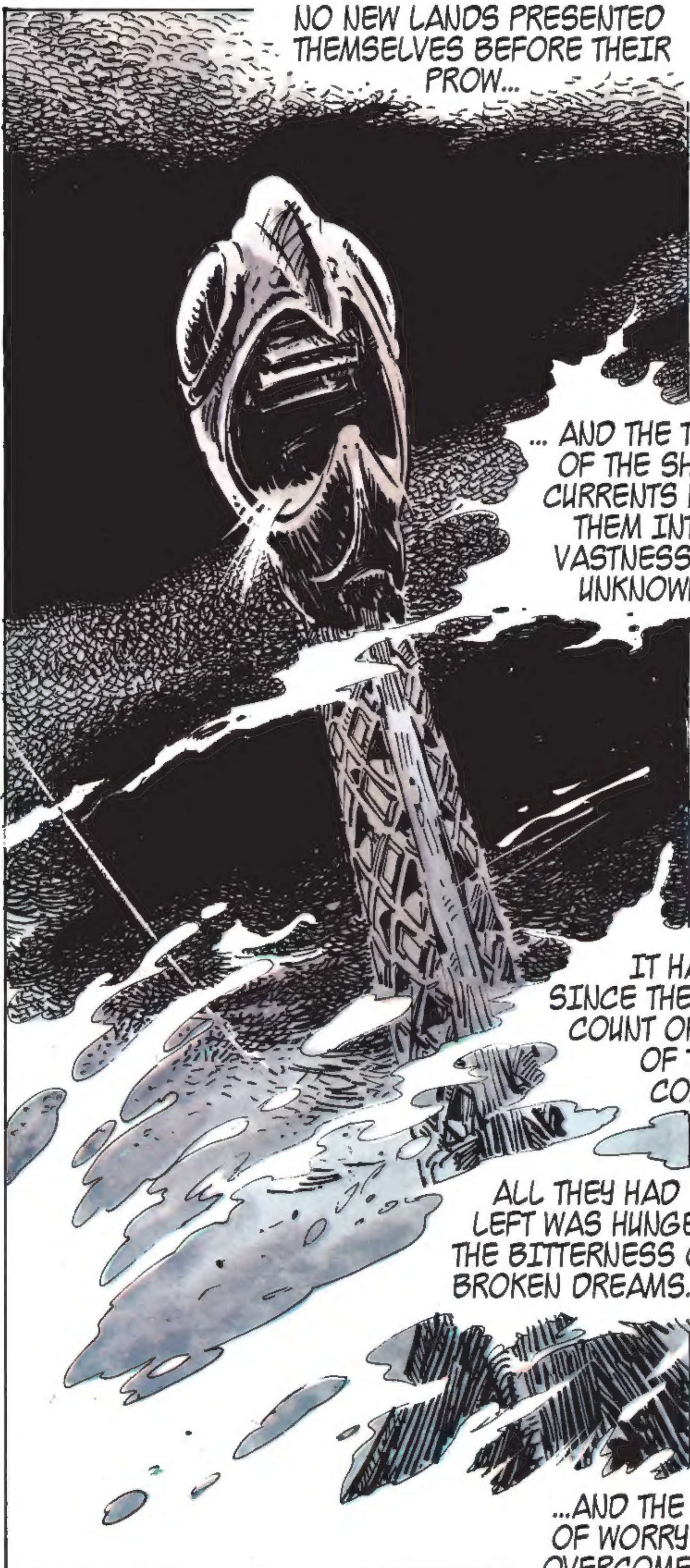
THE LOST DRAKKAR

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY HAD SET OFF, A CONQUERING PEOPLE FULL OF HOPE FOR THE COMING ADVENTURES...



NOW THERE WERE ONLY 15 LEFT, PLAYTHINGS AT THE MERCY OF THE GODS.





NO NEW LANDS PRESENTED
THEMSELVES BEFORE THEIR
PROW...

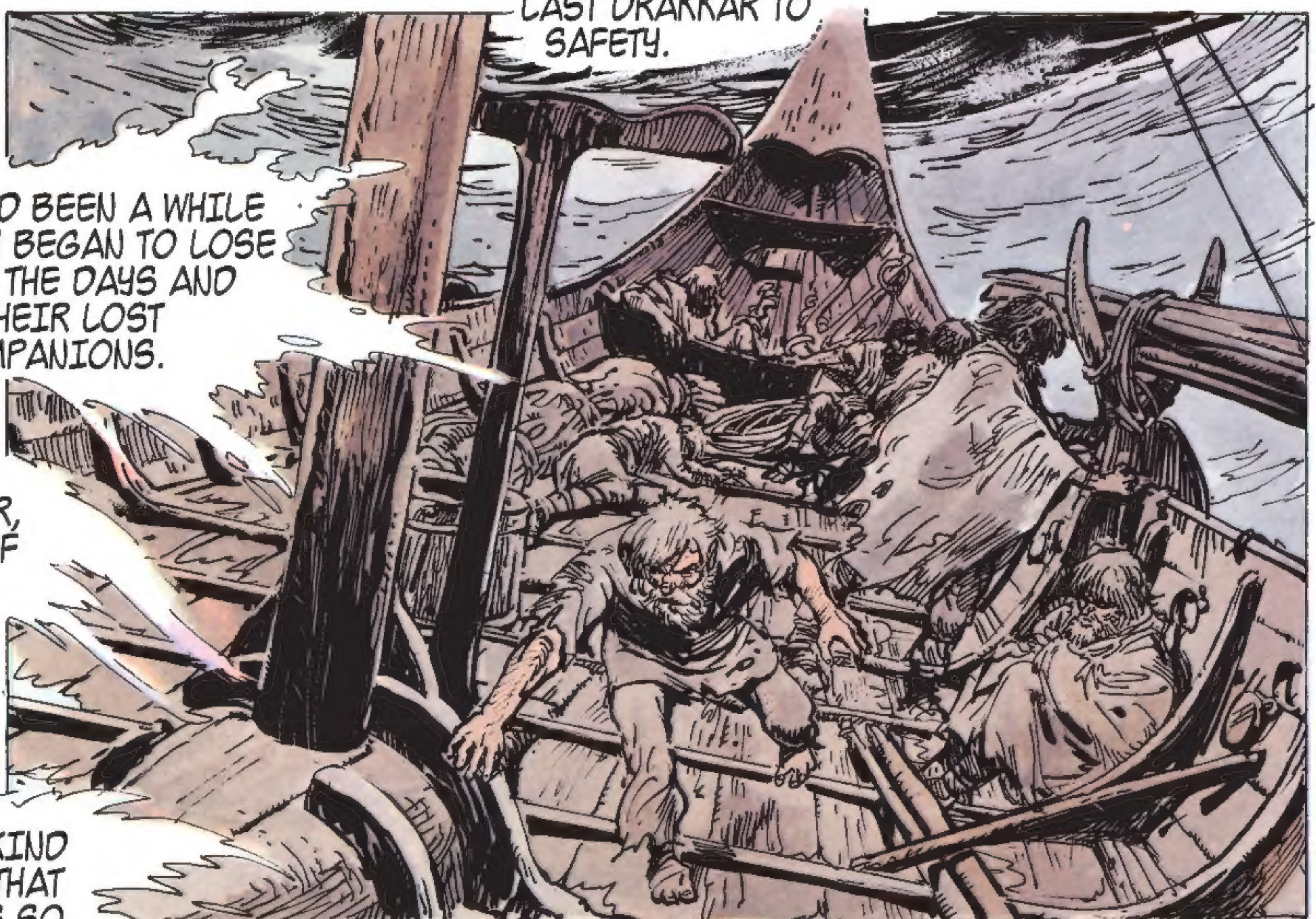
... AND THE TREACHERY
OF THE SHIFTING
CURRENTS HAD LED
THEM INTO THE
VASTNESS OF THE
UNKNOWN.

ALL THEY HAD
LEFT WAS HUNGER,
THE BITTERNESS OF
BROKEN DREAMS...

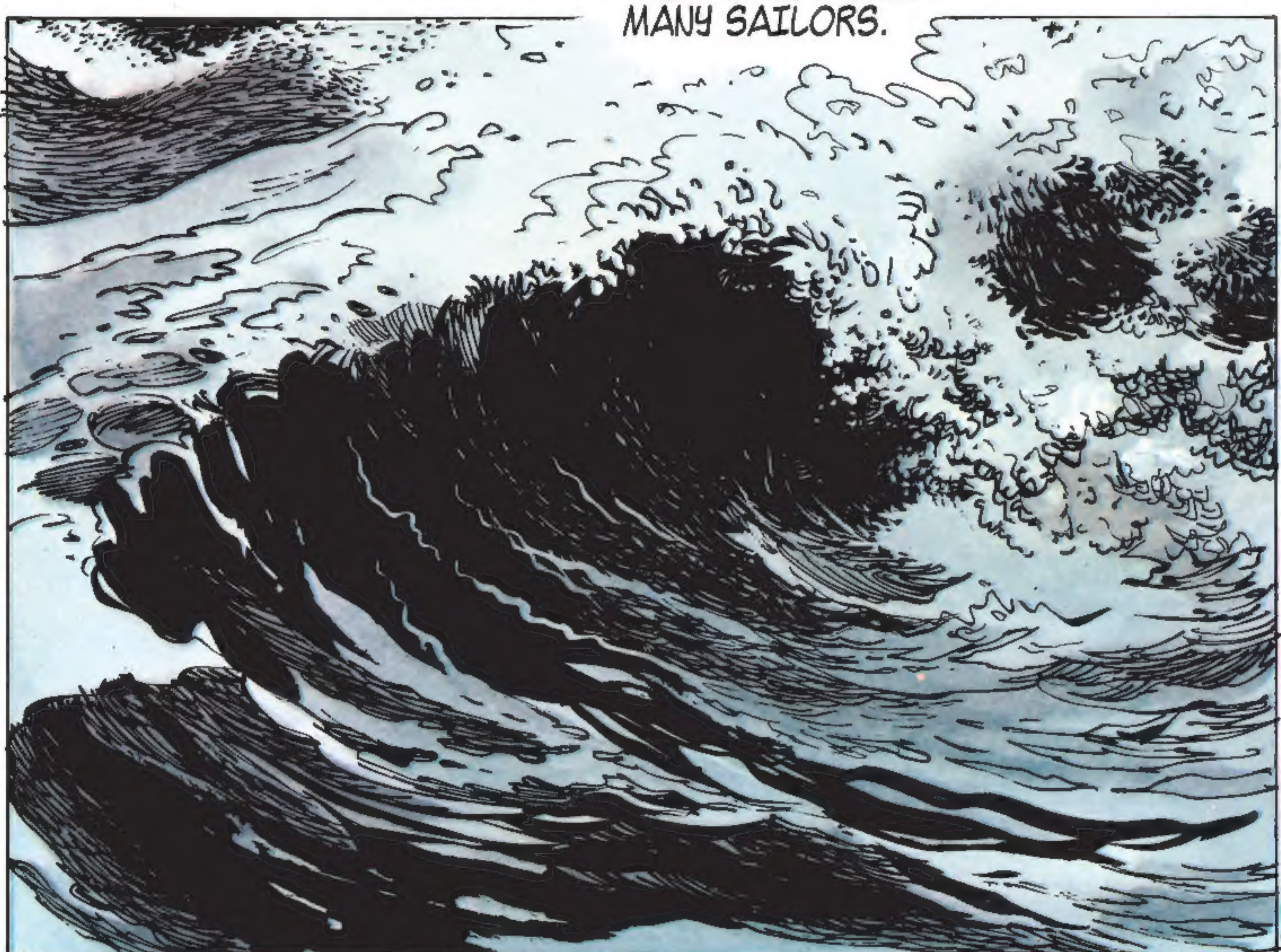
...AND THE KIND
OF WORRY THAT
OVERCOMES SO
MANY SAILORS.



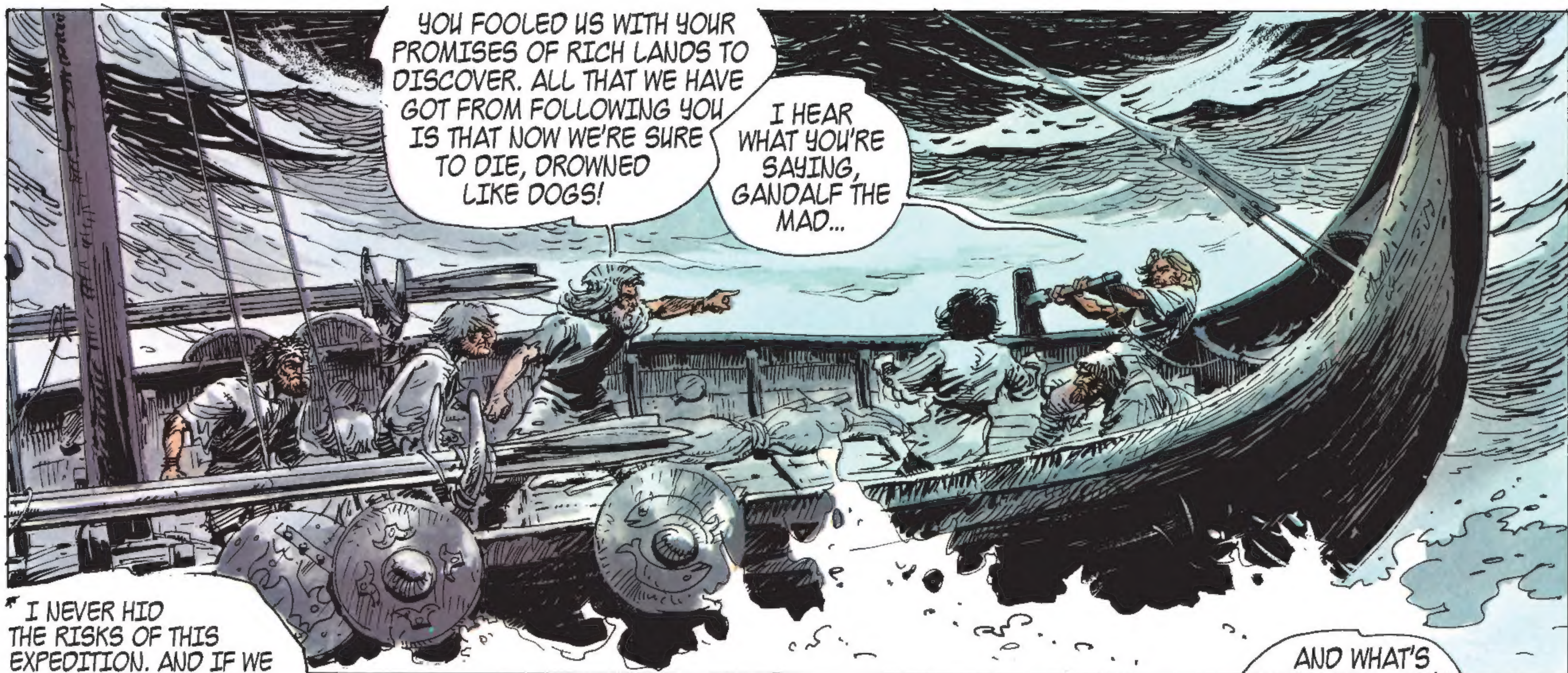
BLINDED BY THICK CLOUDS,
THE SKY WAS CLOSED TO THEM.
EVEN THE PRIEST WAS
POWERLESS TO LEAD THE
LAST DRAKKAR TO
SAFETY.



IT HAD BEEN A WHILE
SINCE THEY BEGAN TO LOSE
COUNT OF THE DAYS AND
OF THEIR LOST
COMPANIONS.



IT'S YOUR
FAULT, LEIF
HARALDSON
!



YOU FOOLED US WITH YOUR PROMISES OF RICH LANDS TO DISCOVER. ALL THAT WE HAVE GOT FROM FOLLOWING YOU IS THAT NOW WE'RE SURE TO DIE, DROWNED LIKE DOGS!

I HEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, GANDALF THE MAD...

I NEVER HID THE RISKS OF THIS EXPEDITION. AND IF WE HAD SUCCEEDED, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN THE FIRST TO KISS MY FEET FOR HAVING MADE YOUR FORTUNE!

AND WHAT'S MORE, YOU CAN'T EVEN GET US BACK TO NORTHLAND.



YES, BUT IN THE MEANTIME MORE THAN A HUNDRED OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY PERISHED.

GANDALF IS RIGHT.



THERE MAY STILL BE A WAY!



OH YEAH? WHICH IS?

OUR PEOPLE DEPEND ON THE MERCY OF AEGIR, THE SEA GOD. HE MUST NOT HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY SATISFIED WITH OUR OFFERINGS...



BUT PERHAPS WE'D HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF APPEASING HIM BY A **HUMAN SACRIFICE!!**



ARE YOU MAD!
THIS PRACTICE HAS BEEN
FORGOTTEN FOR GENERATIONS
AND WOULD BE BENEATH A
VIKING'S DIGNITY. THERE'S
NO WAY WE COULD
DO IT.

ON THE
CONTRARY,
I THINK IT'S AN
EXCELLENT IDEA.

DON'T WORRY
ABOUT THAT, LEIF,
HE HAS ALREADY BEEN
CHOSEN. WE HAVE TO
SACRIFICE TO THE GODS
THAT WHICH IS DEAREST TO
US. AND WHO HERE IS
MORE PRECIOUS TO OUR
HEARTS THAN OUR
BELOVED LEADER?...



POOR
SUPERSTITIOUS
IDIOTS! IT'S ON
YOURSELVES THAT YOU
MUST COUNT TO GET OUT
OF THIS! NOTHING ELSE
BUT YOURSELVES!



SHUT UP, LEIF!
YOU'RE INSULTING
THE GODS.

WE COULDN'T DO
MUCH BETTER TO
ATTRACT THE MERCY
OF AEGIR THAN TO OFFER
HIM THE LIFE OF A VALUED
WARRIOR. AND ANYWAY,
WHAT HAVE WE GOT
TO LOSE?

THAT'S A QUESTION YOU
SHOULD ASK THE ONE
OF US WHO WOULD BE
CHOSEN AS THE VICTIM.
BECAUSE YOU SEEM TO
HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT
WE HAVE TO CHOOSE
ONE, GANDALF.



GRAB HOLD OF HIM
AND TIE HIM TO THE
MAST!



SO YOU'VE
FINALLY GOT WHAT
YOU WANTED, SWINE:
TO KILL ME WITHOUT
RISK TO TAKE
MY PLACE.



A REALLY FINE
INHERITANCE. I
WILL REIGN OVER A
DOZEN SKELETONS
IN A HALF-SUNKEN
DRAKKAR.



NORTHERN VIKINGS,
I HAVE BEEN YOUR
LOYAL LEADER FOR
NEARLY 30 YEARS.

LET ME FIGHT
GANDALF THE MAD ONE
ON ONE AND GIVE ME A
CHANCE TO DIE WITH A
SWORD IN MY HAND.



THAT'S FAIR, LEIF
HAS EARNED
THIS RIGHT.

IF HE DIES WITHOUT
HIS WEAPON IN HAND,
HE WILL NOT BE ABLE
TO ENTER VALHALLA,
ODIN'S HALL WITH
540 DOORS.

GIVE HIM
HIS SWORD,
GANDALF.

SO
BE IT.

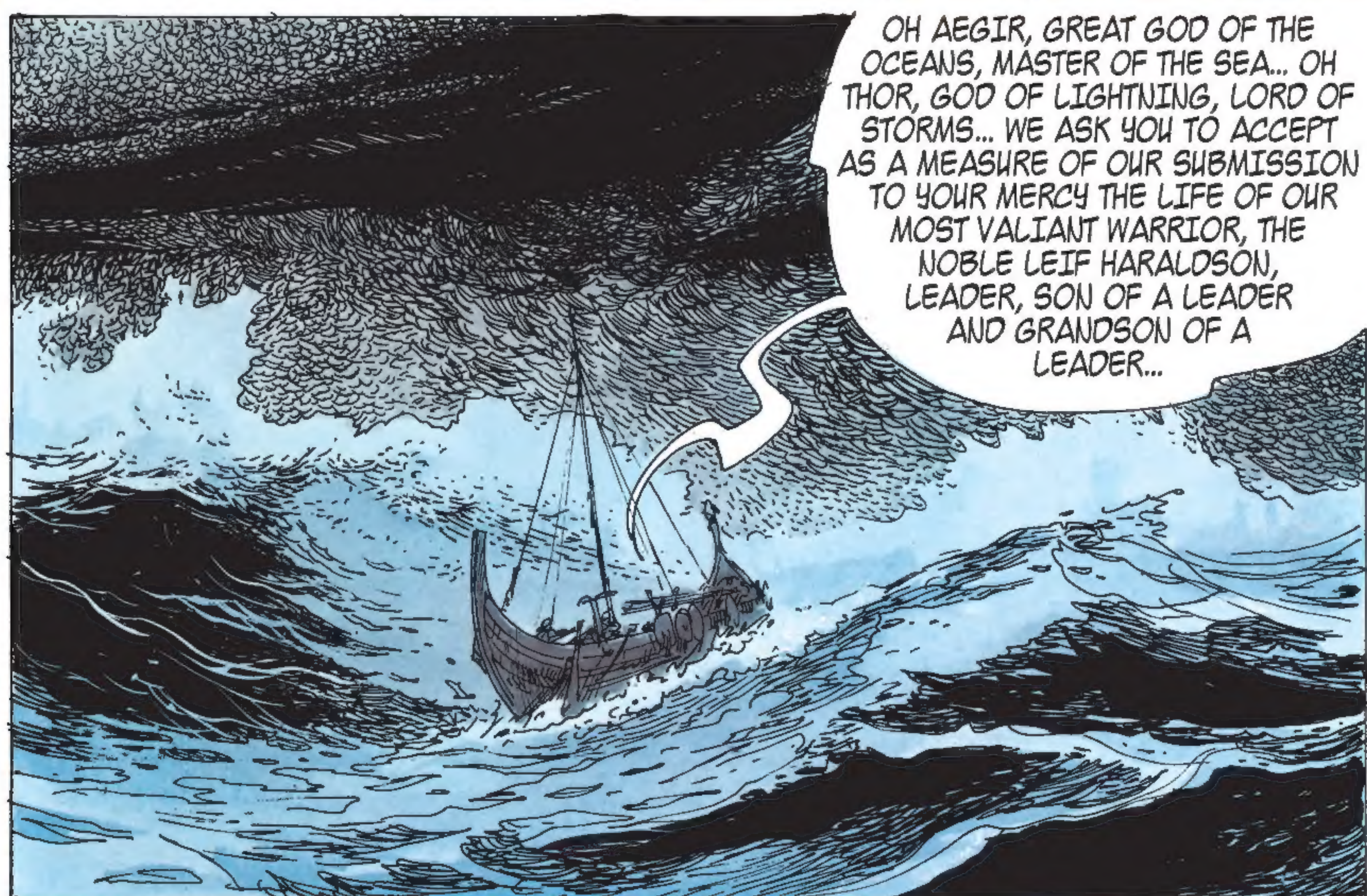
COWARD!
WRETCHED
COWARD!



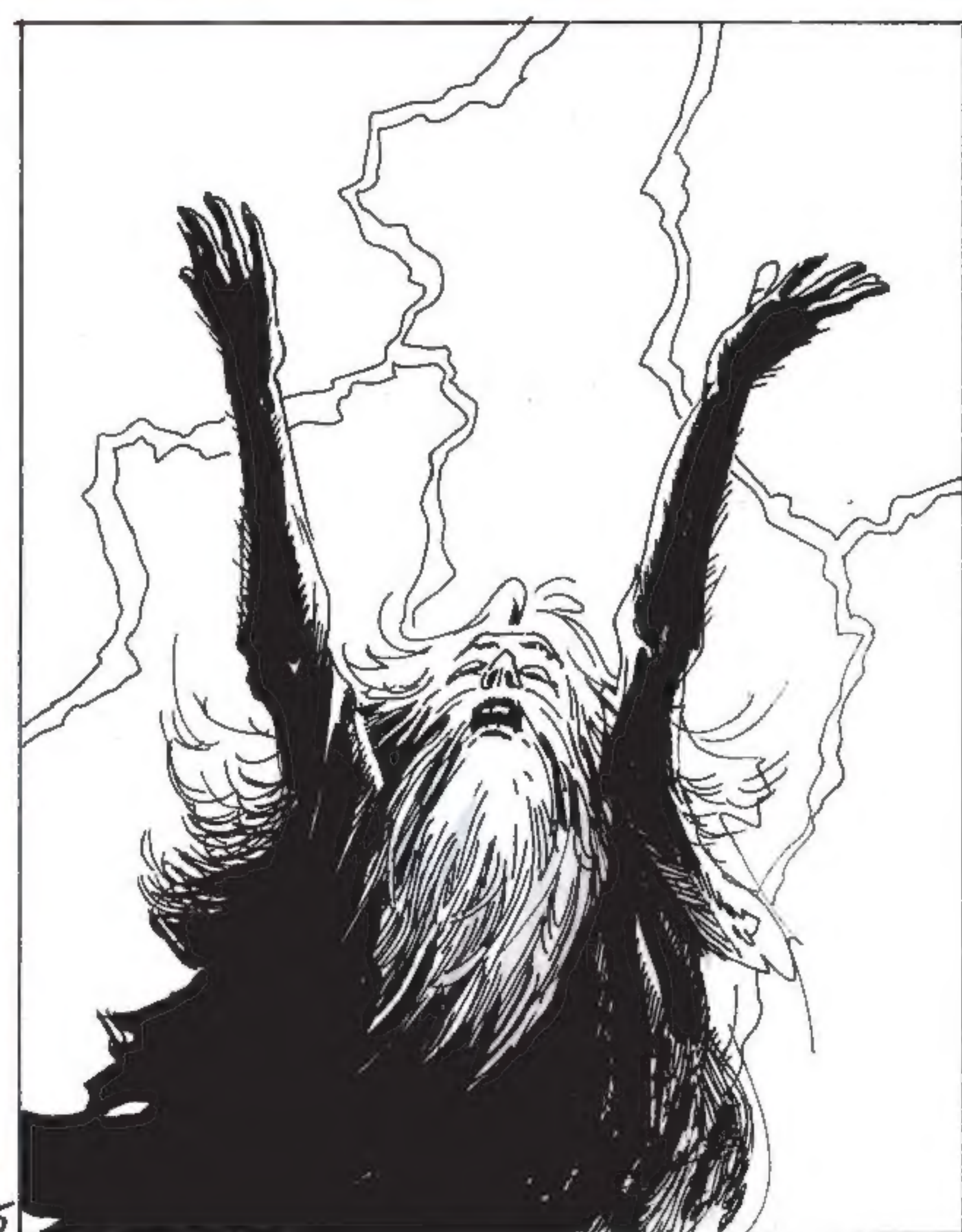
YOU SEE? YOU CALL
ME A SWINE EVEN
THOUGH I AM READY
TO GIVE IN TO
YOUR SIMPLEST
WISHES...

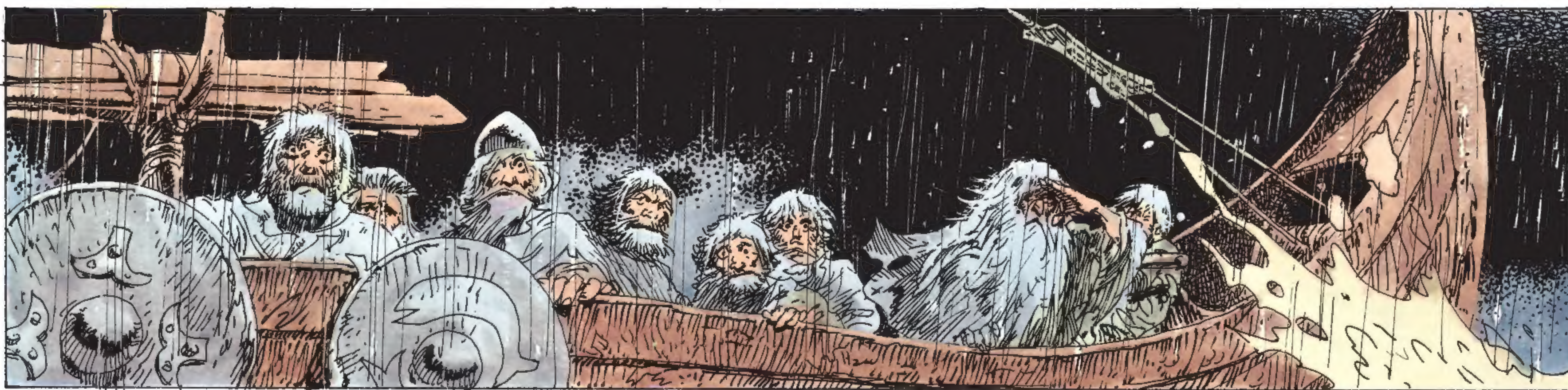


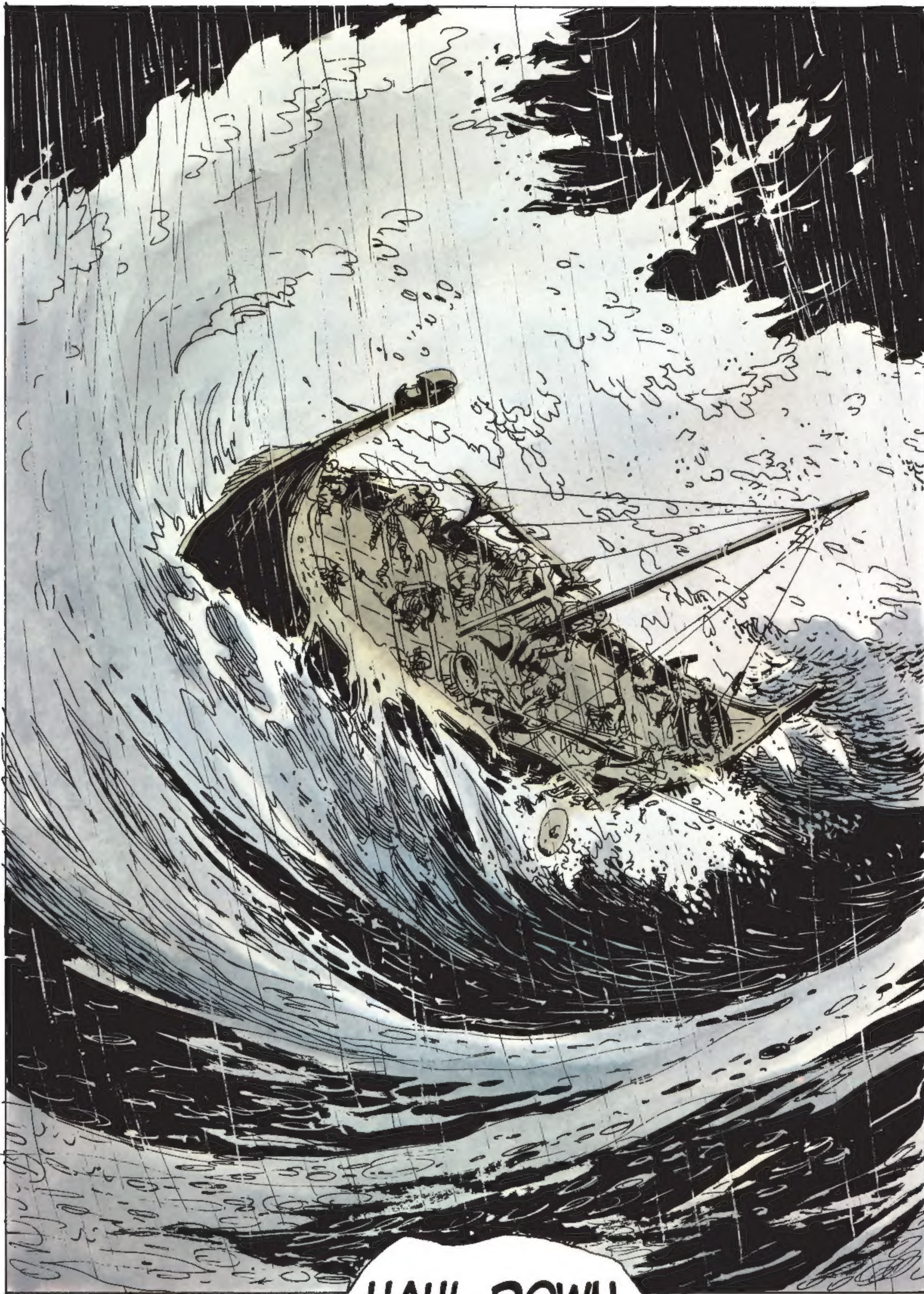
HA HA HA! WHAT ARE YOU
COMPLAINING ABOUT? ISN'T
THIS WHAT YOU WANTED!!
COME ON, PRIEST, YOU
CAN BEGIN THE INVOKING
CEREMONY.



OH AEGIR, GREAT GOD OF THE
OCEANS, MASTER OF THE SEA... OH
THOR, GOD OF LIGHTNING, LORD OF
STORMS... WE ASK YOU TO ACCEPT
AS A MEASURE OF OUR SUBMISSION
TO YOUR MERCY THE LIFE OF OUR
MOST VALIANT WARRIOR, THE
NOBLE LEIF HARALDSON,
LEADER, SON OF A LEADER
AND GRANDSON OF A
LEADER...







**HAUL DOWN
THE SAILS!
MAN THE
OARS!**

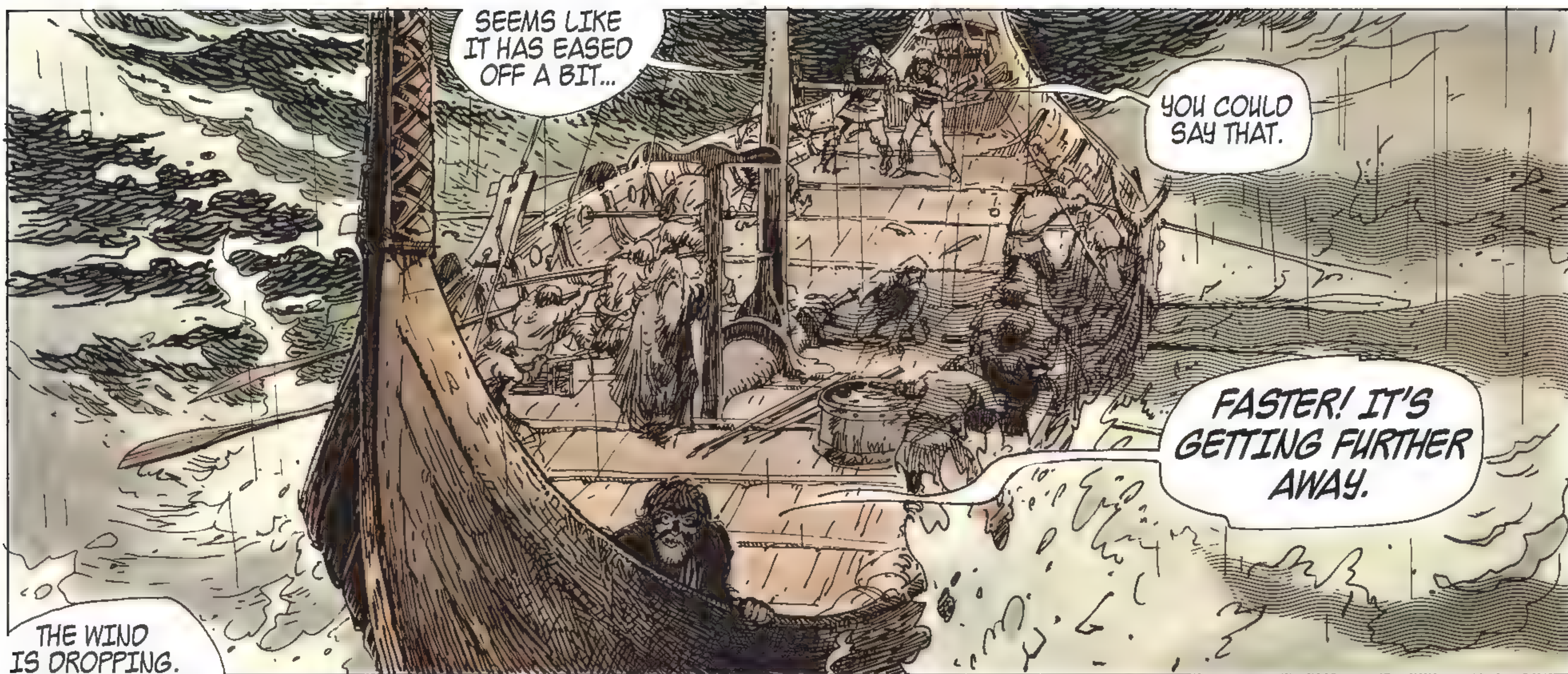


**TAKE THE
TILLER, LEIF.
ONLY YOU
CAN GET THE
DRAKKAR OUT
OF THIS
NIGHTMARE.**



**THE LIGHT!
IT'S GETTING
FURTHER
AWAY!...**





SEEMS LIKE
IT HAS EASED
OFF A BIT...

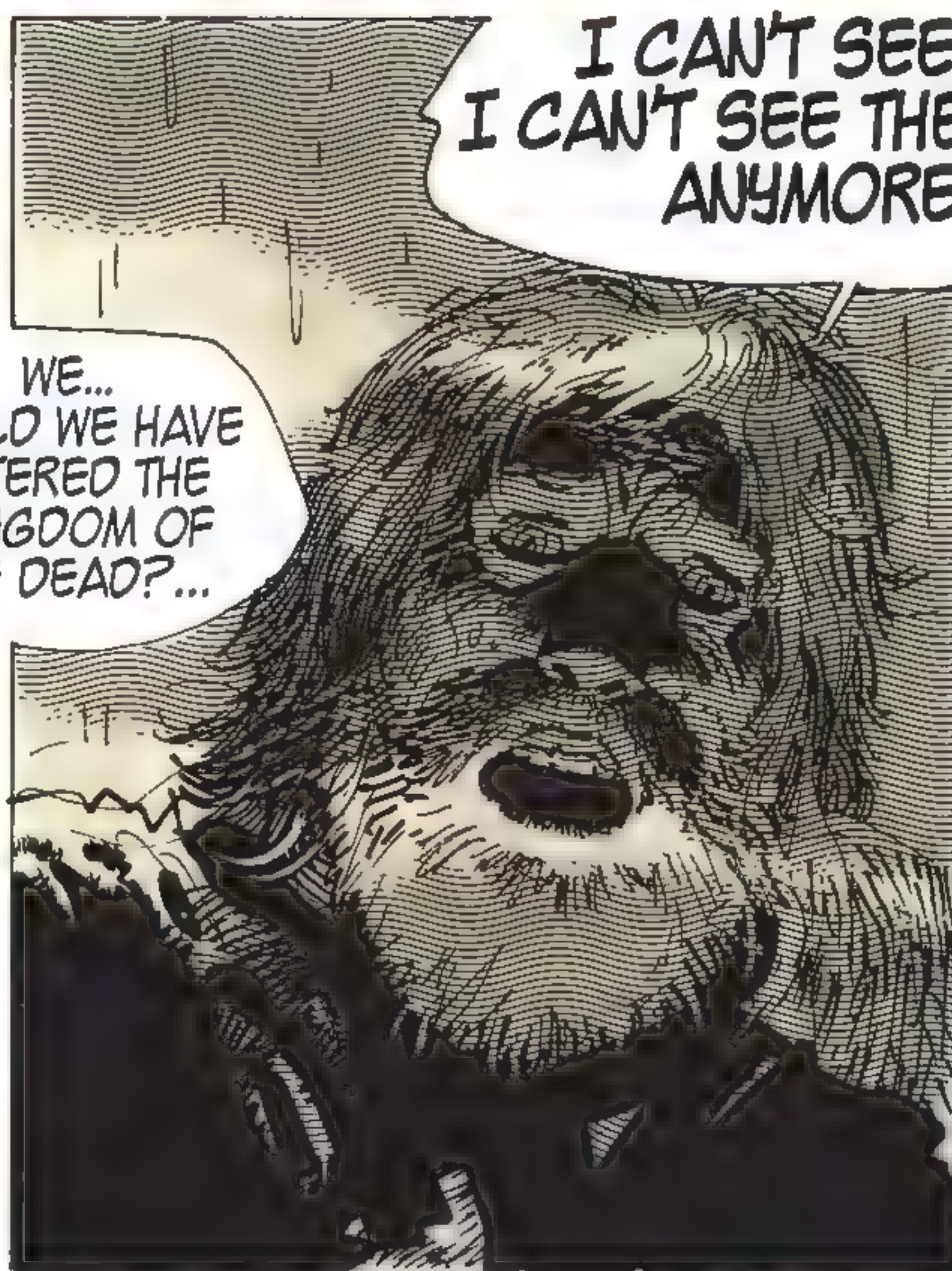
YOU COULD
SAY THAT.

FASTER! IT'S
GETTING FURTHER
AWAY.

THE WIND
IS DROPPING.
WE'RE SLOWING.
BUT WHAT NEW
EVIL BEFALLS
US?



WE...
COULD WE HAVE
ENTERED THE
KINGDOM OF
THE DEAD?...



I CAN'T SEE IT!
I CAN'T SEE THE LIGHT
ANYMORE!



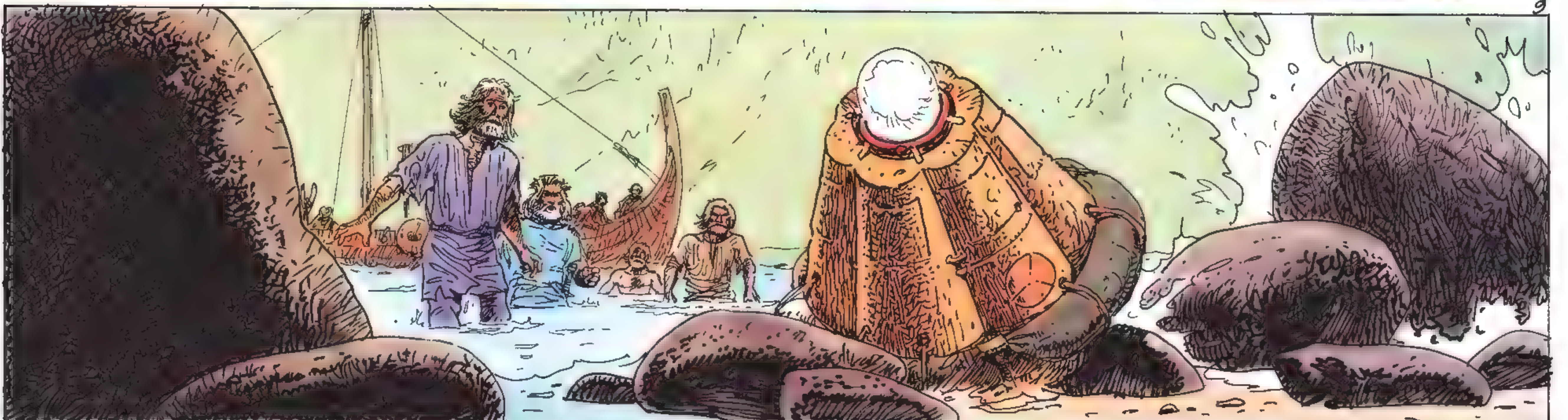
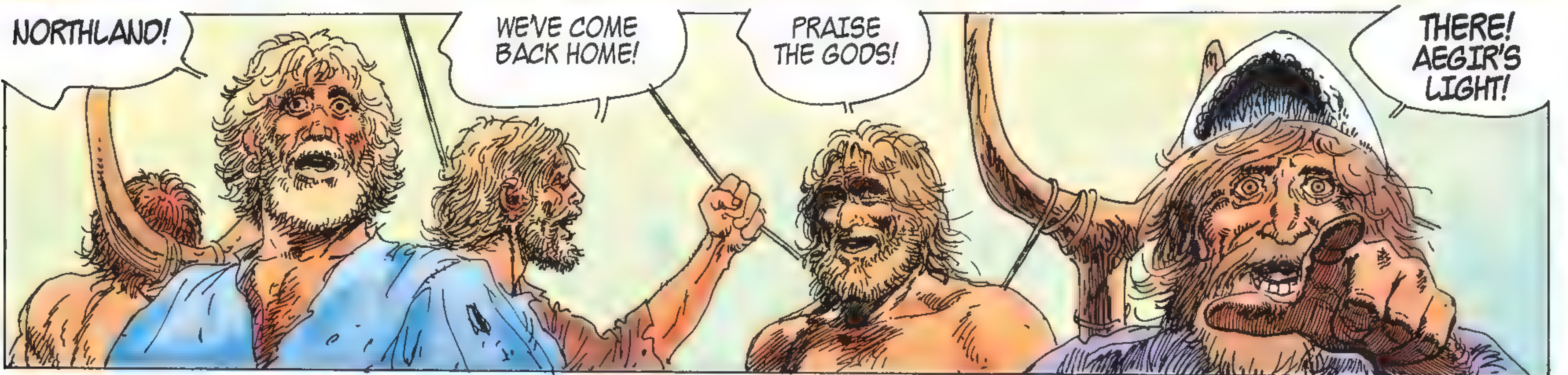
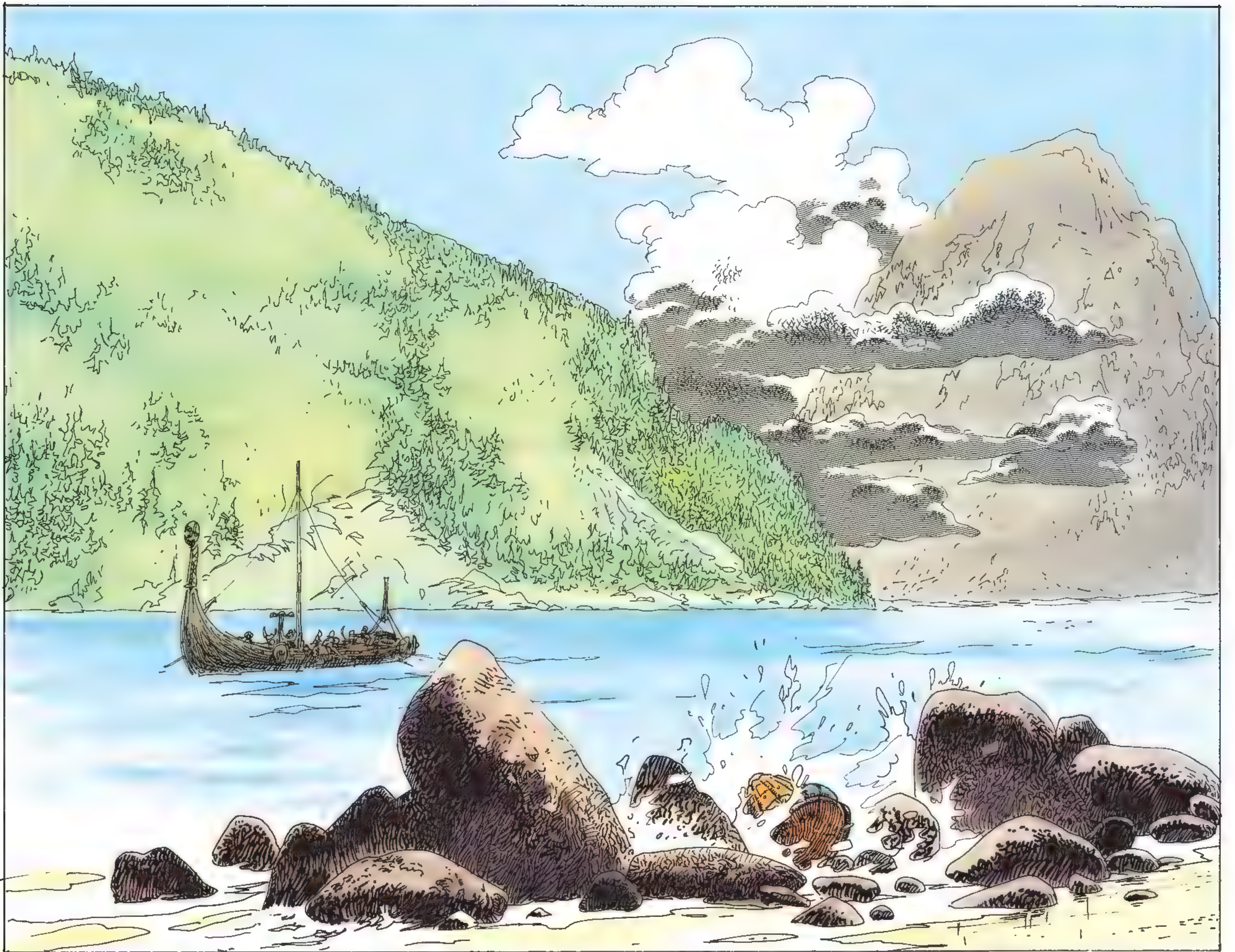
WE'RE
LOST! THE
GODS HAVE
ABANDONED
US!



IT'S BECAUSE
WE GAVE UP
OUR SACRIFICE.
WE HAVE
TO KILL HIM
RIGHT AWAY...

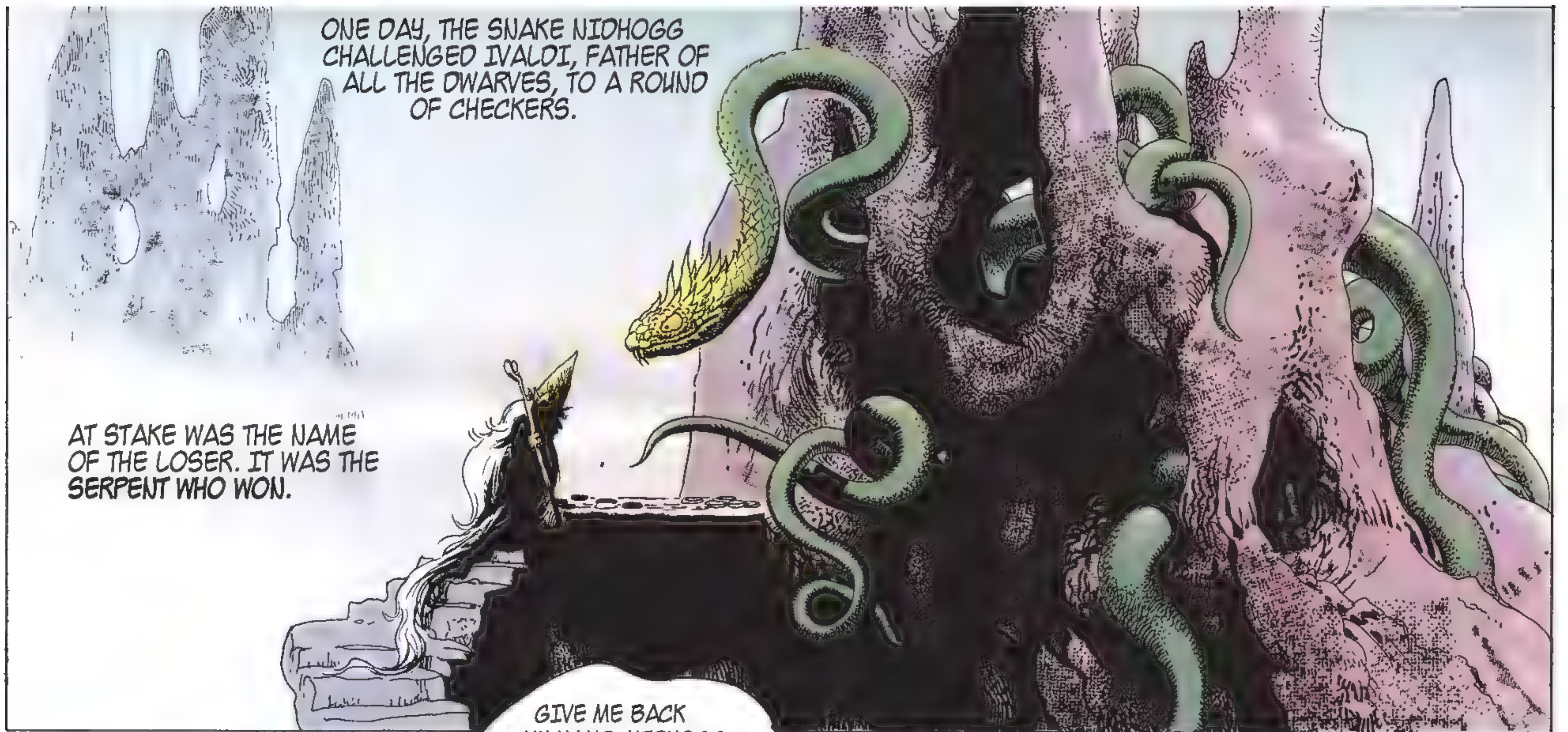
LOOK!
THE FOG
IS CLEARING.







THE METAL THAT DIDN'T EXIST



GIVE ME BACK MY NAME, NIDHOGG. WITHOUT IT, I CAN NEITHER CONTINUE TO LIVE NOR DIE. GIVE IT BACK TO ME, I BESEECH YOU.

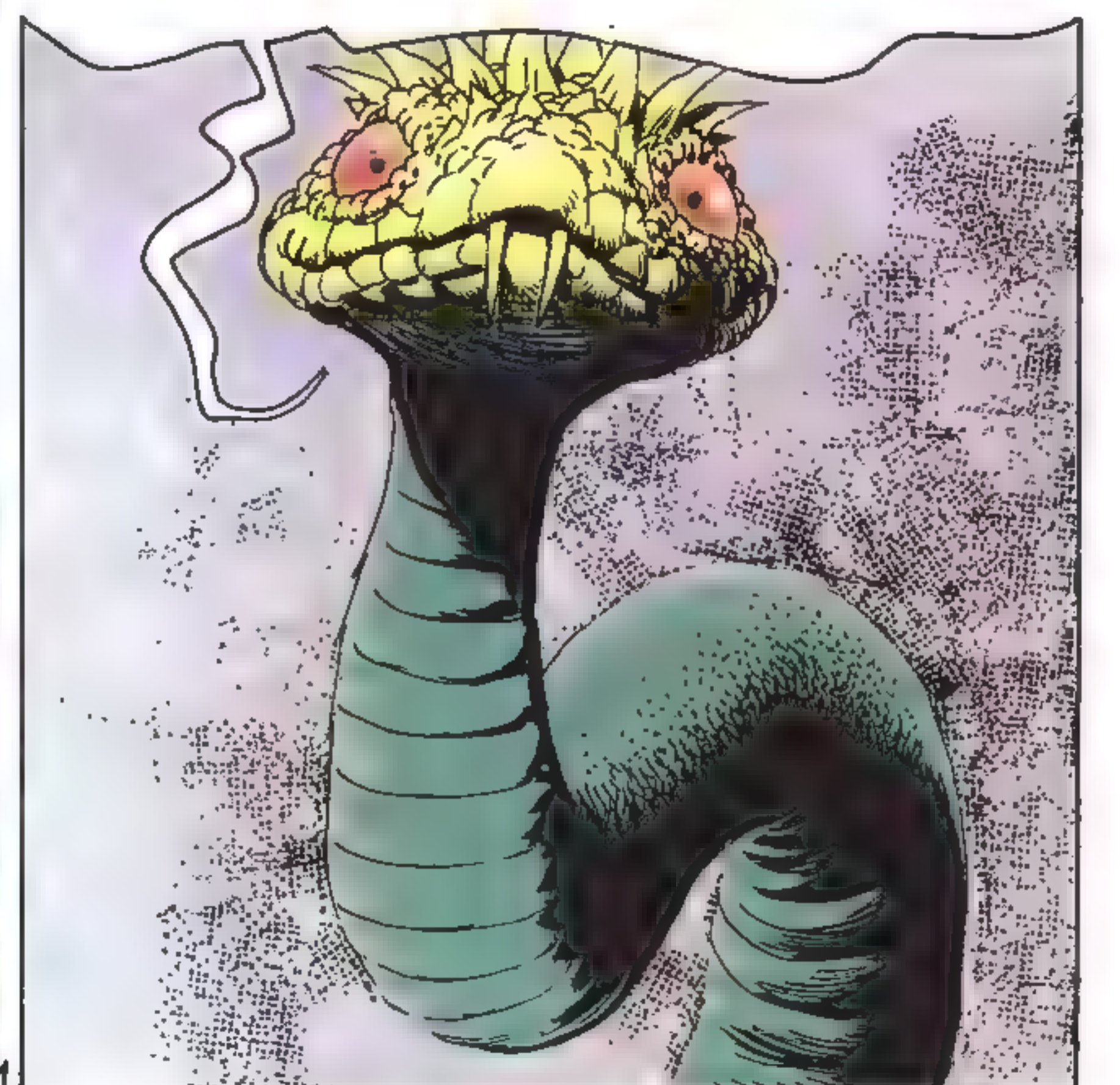
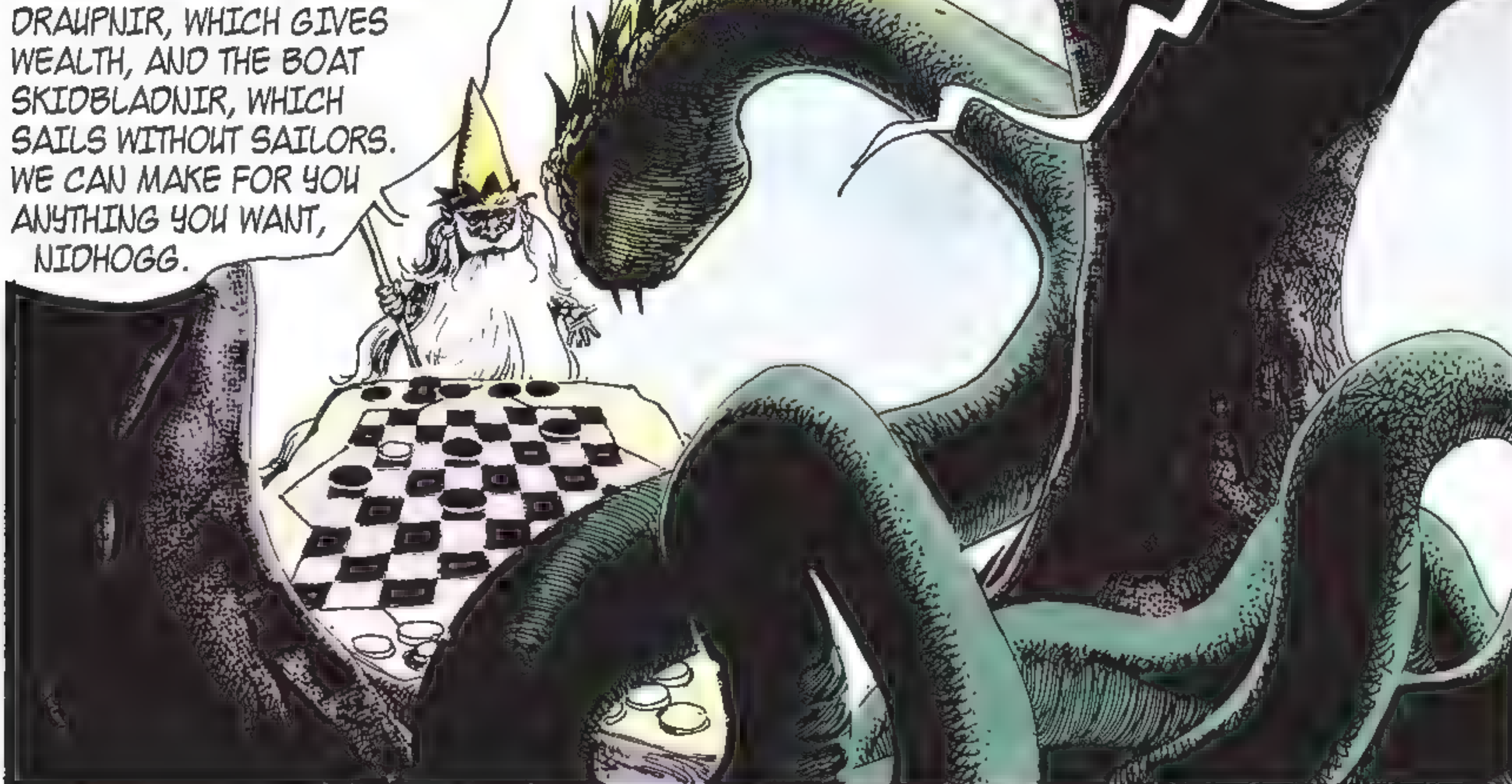
YOU KNOW THAT THE DWARVES ARE KEEPERS OF EVERYTHING THAT IS BURIED BENEATH THE EARTH. IN EXCHANGE FOR MY NAME, I WILL GIVE YOU THE MOST FABULOUS TREASURE THAT A KING HAS EVER POSSESSED.

PAH... YOUR TREASURES DON'T INTEREST ME, IVALDI.

WE HAVE MADE THE HAMMER MJOLNIR FOR THE GOD THOR AND THE SPEAR GUNGNIR FOR THE GREAT ODIN. WE HAVE CRAFTED THE RING DRAUPNIR, WHICH GIVES WEALTH, AND THE BOAT SKIDBLADNIR, WHICH SAILS WITHOUT SAILORS. WE CAN MAKE FOR YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT, NIDHOGG.

REALLY? WELL THEN! VERY WELL...

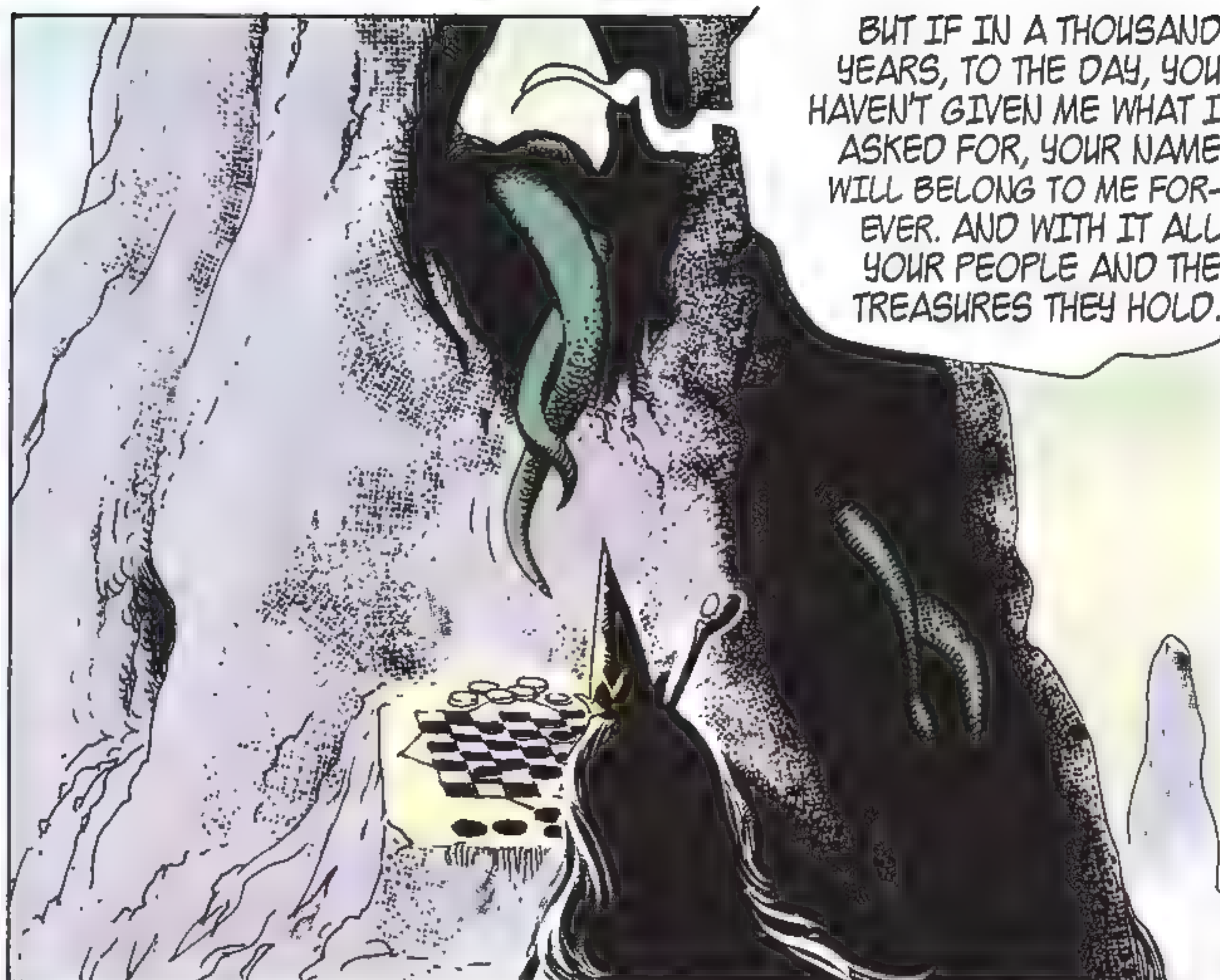
I WILL GIVE YOU BACK YOUR NAME THE DAY YOU CAN GIVE ME A JEWEL MADE FROM A METAL THAT DOESN'T EXIST!





WHAT?! WHAT YOU'RE ASKING ME THERE IS IMPOSSIBLE!!

COME, COME. I THOUGHT THAT DWARVES COULD MAKE EVERYTHING. THAT'S A SHAME FOR YOU, IVALDI. I WILL GIVE YOU A THOUSAND YEARS TO MAKE ME THIS JEWEL.



BUT IF IN A THOUSAND YEARS, TO THE DAY, YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN ME WHAT I ASKED FOR, YOUR NAME WILL BELONG TO ME FOREVER. AND WITH IT ALL YOUR PEOPLE AND THE TREASURES THEY HOLD.



WHEN THE DWARVES LEARNED OF WHAT HAPPENED, THEY WERE FILLED WITH FEAR.

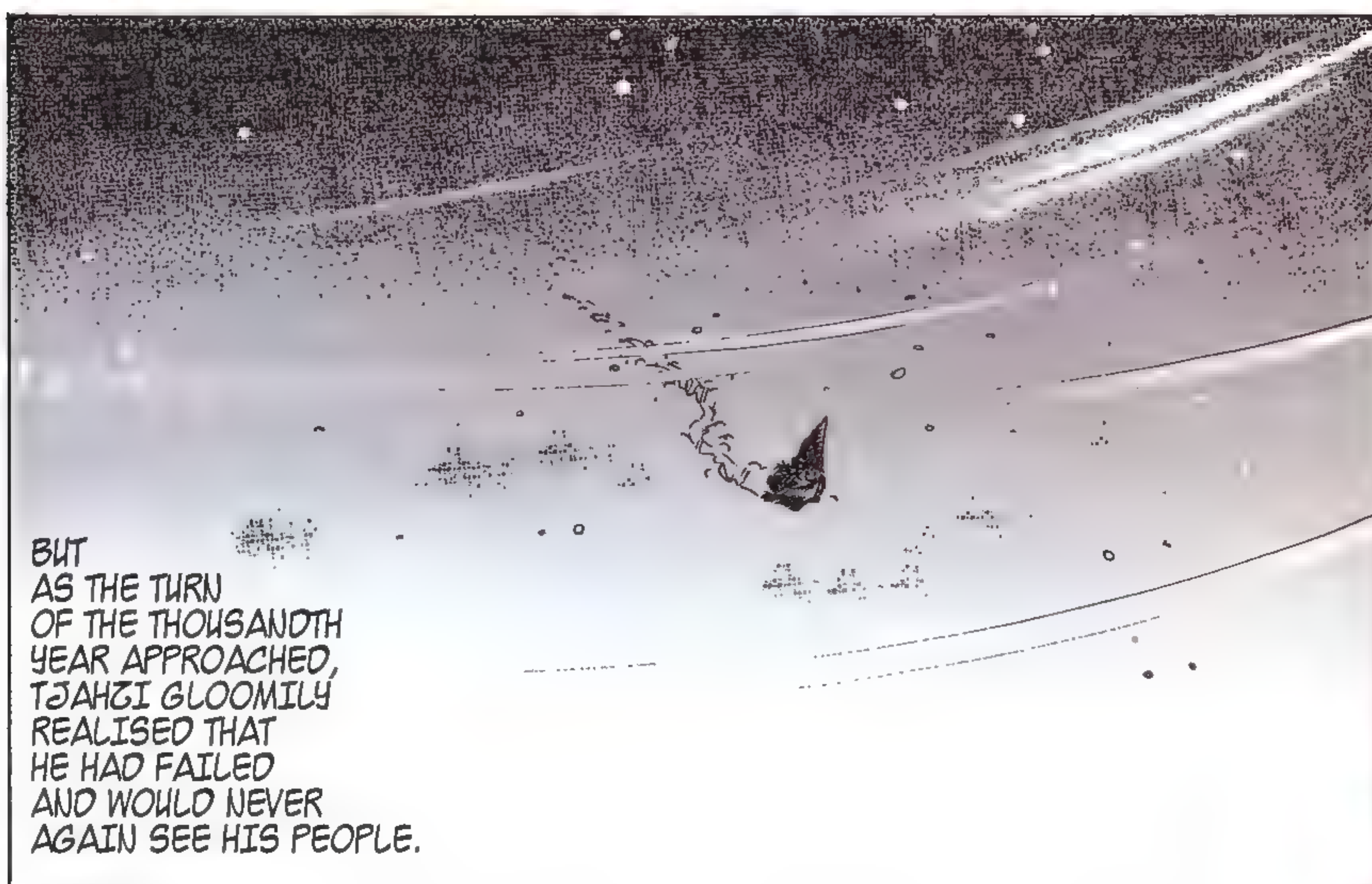
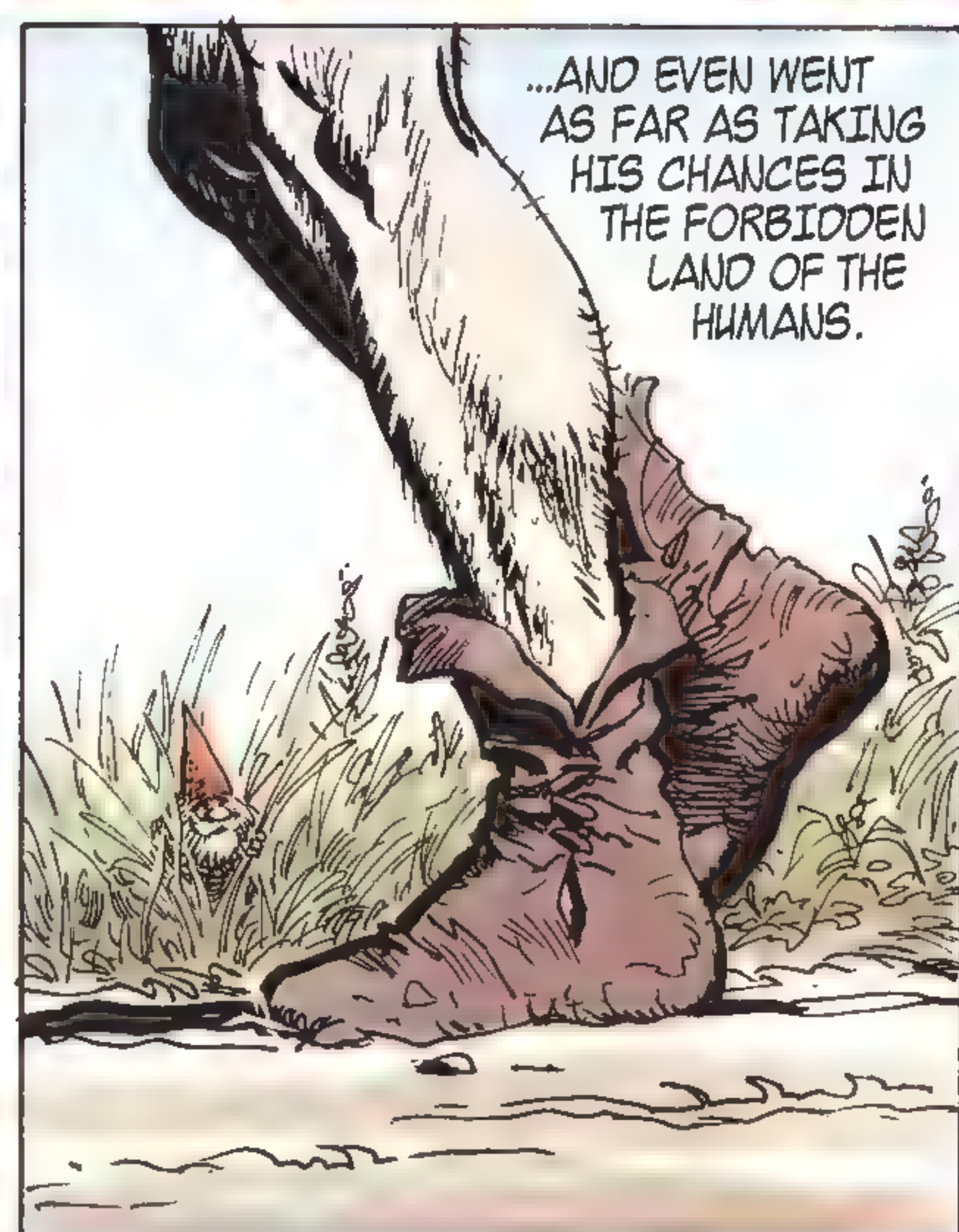
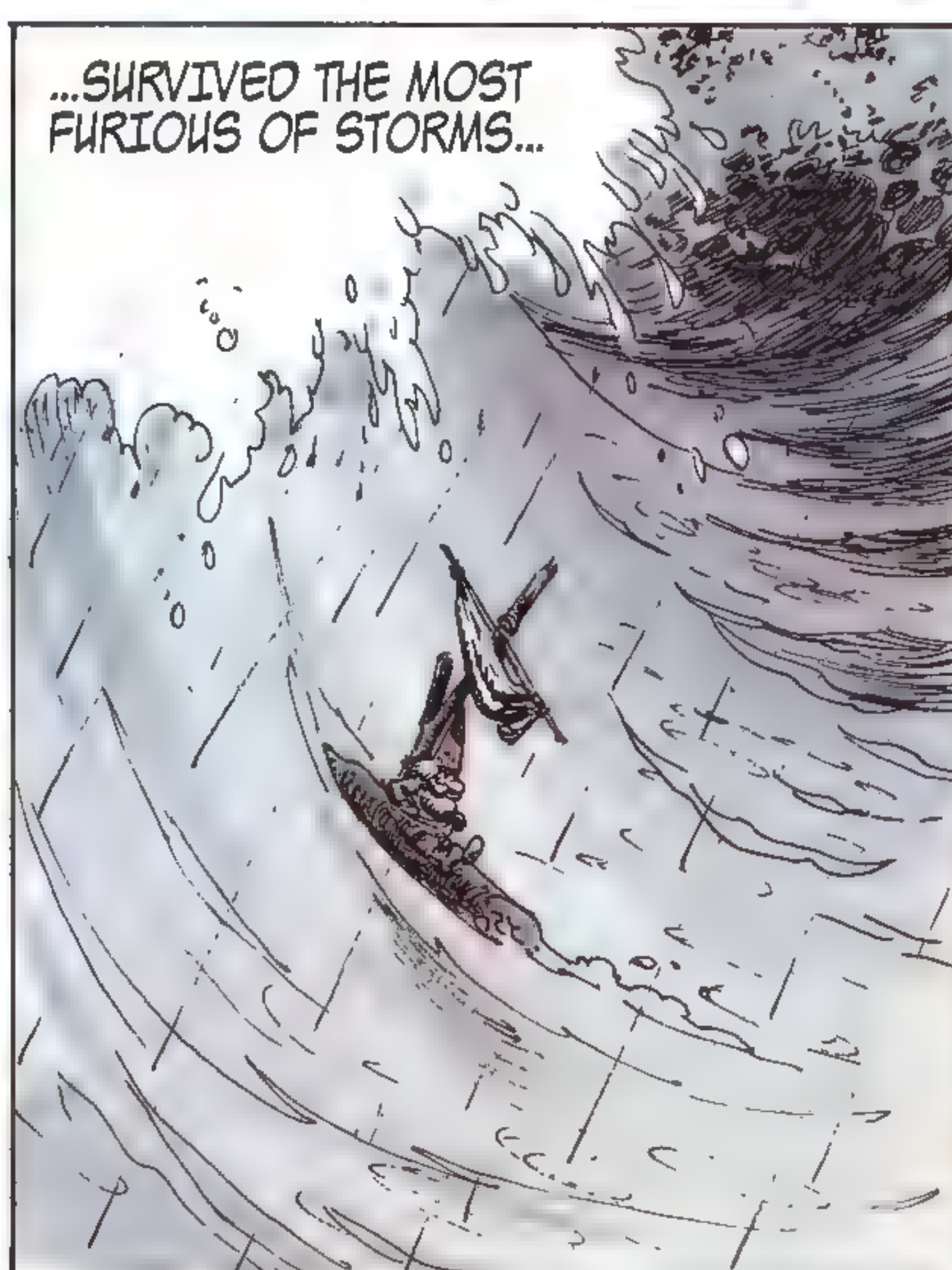
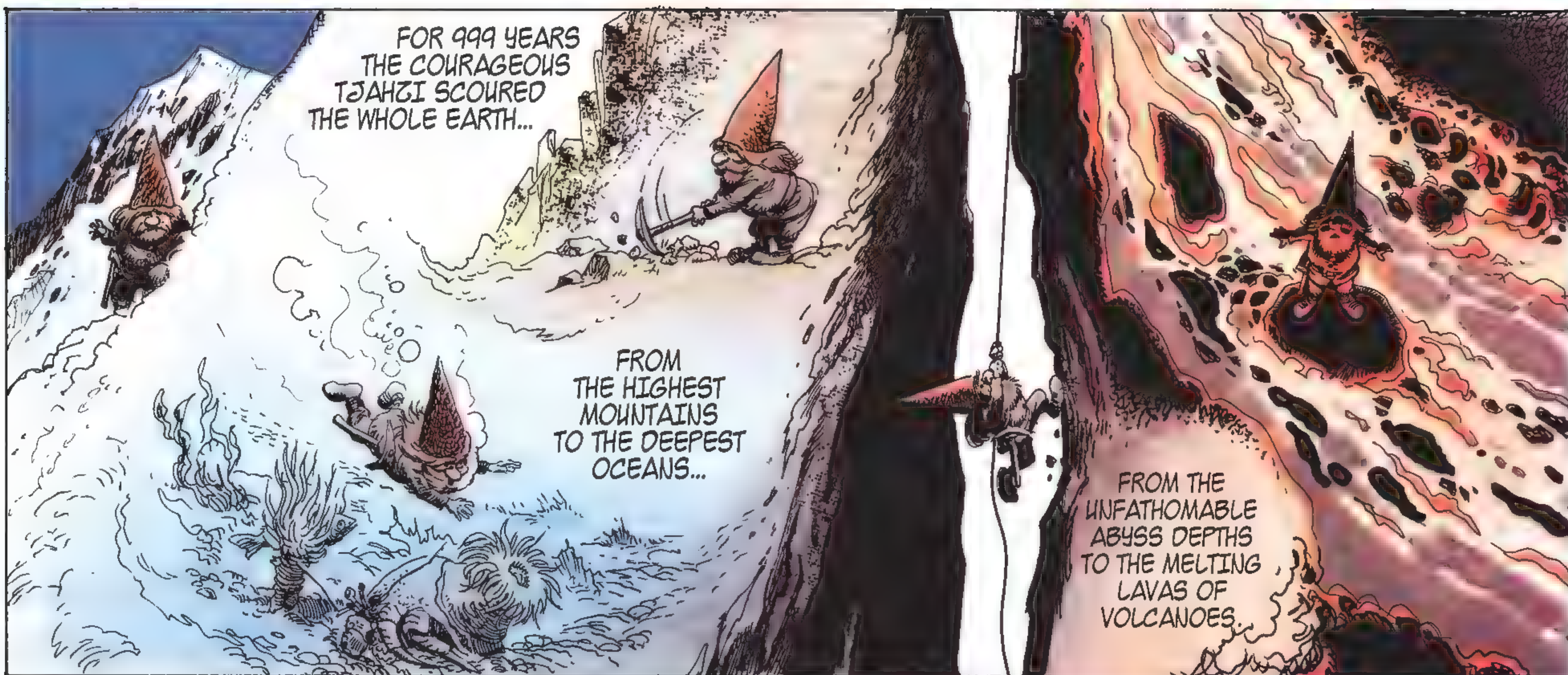
WHAT WOULD THEIR LIVES BE LIKE IF THE ONE WHO RULED THEM LOST HIS NAME?

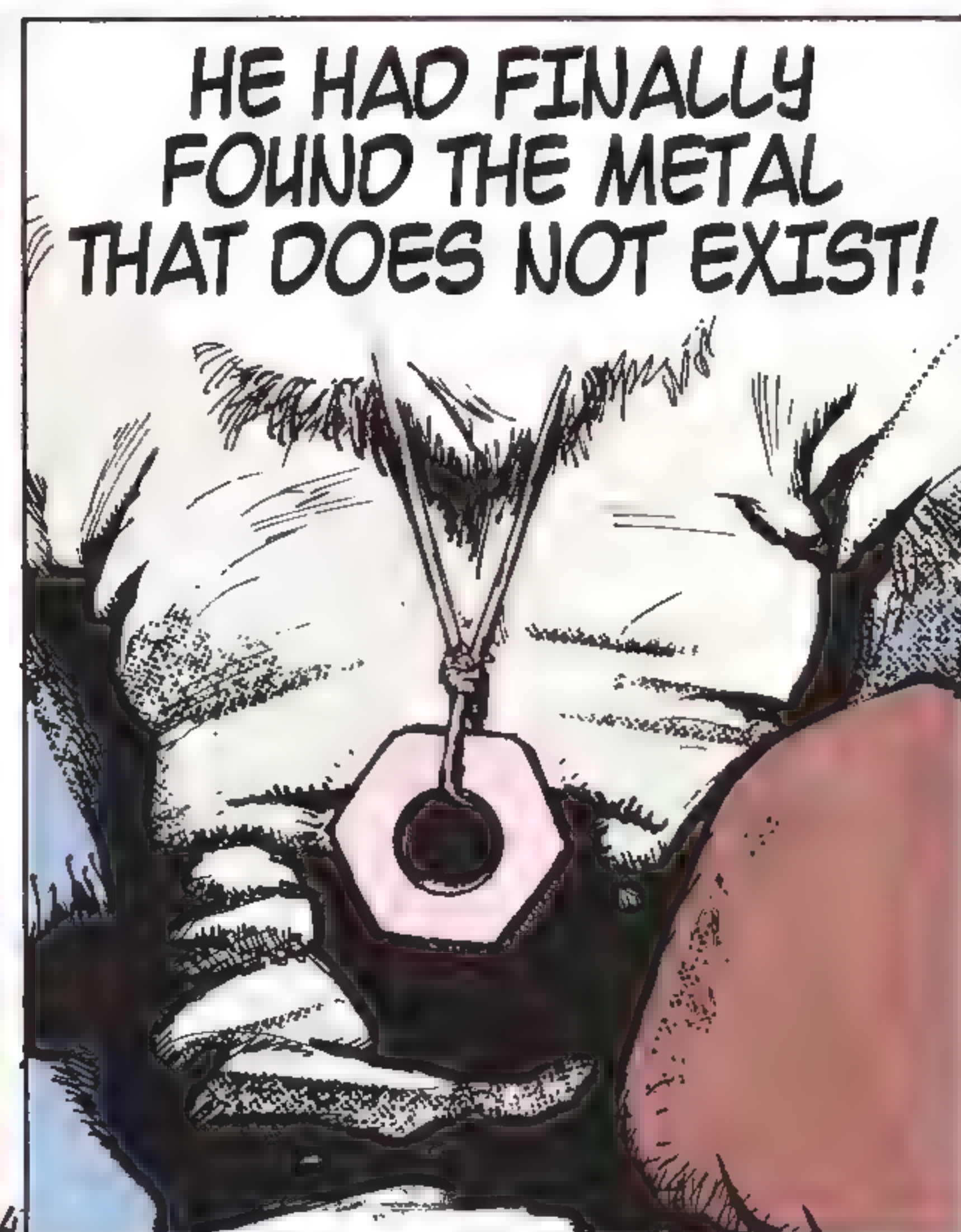
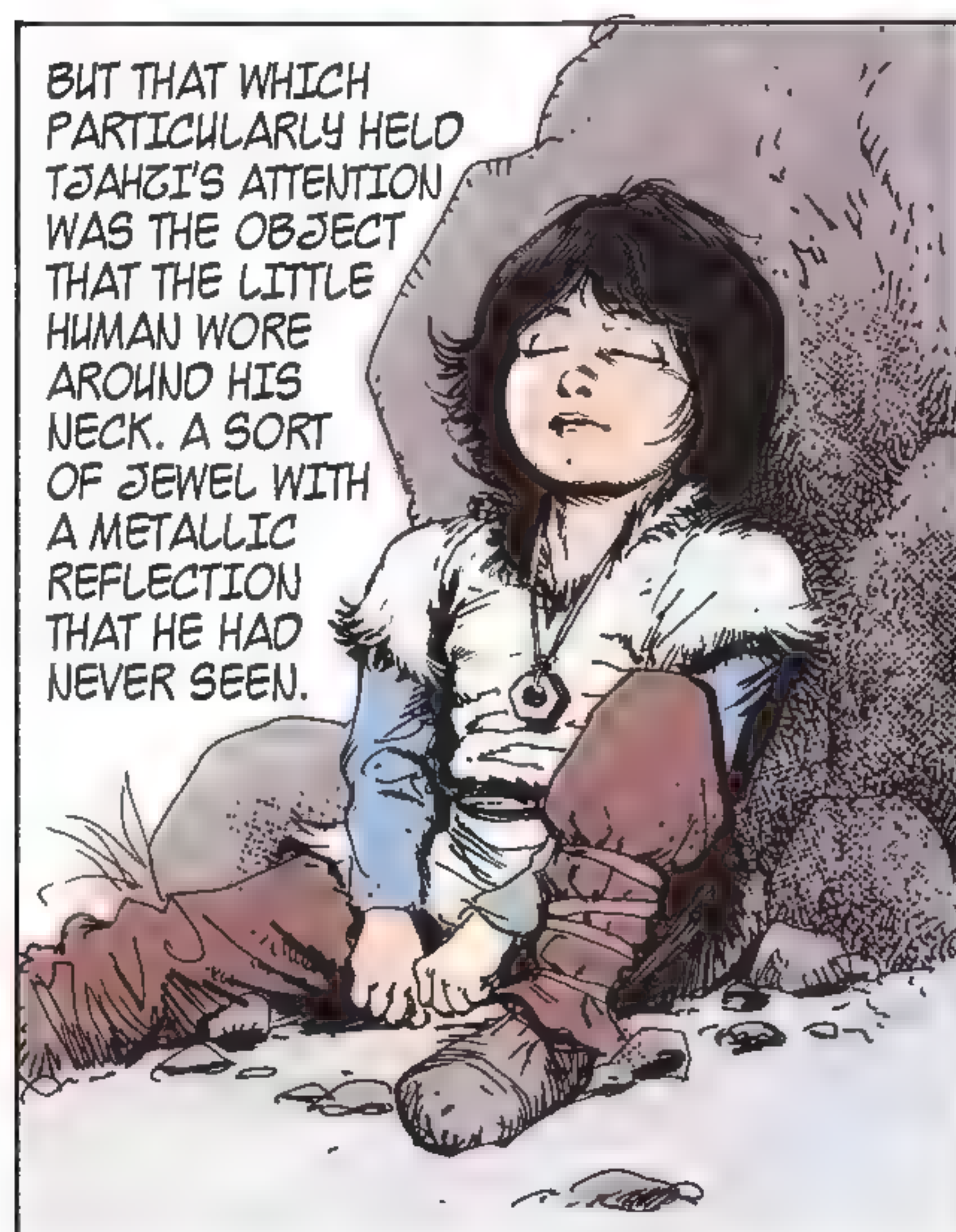
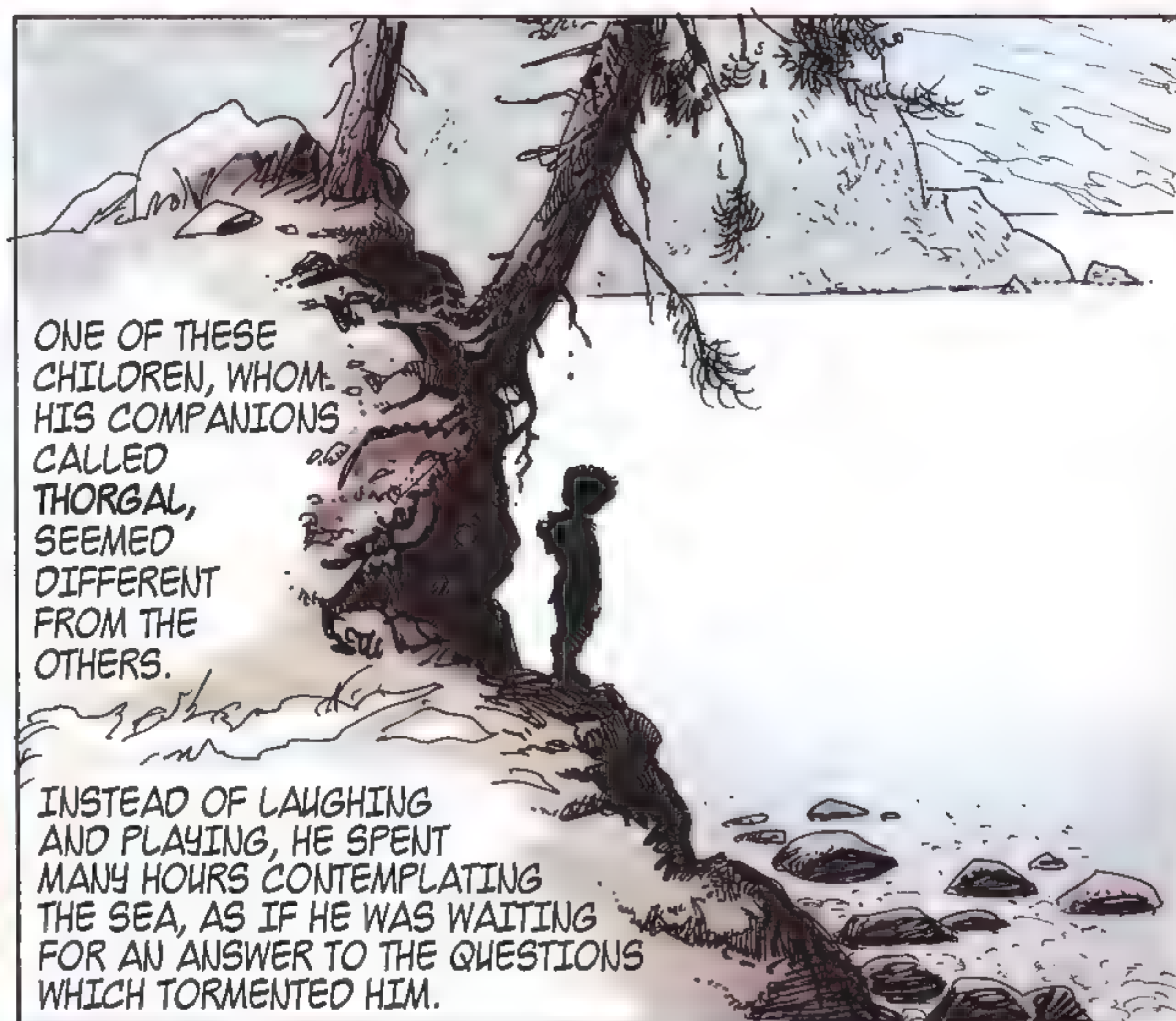
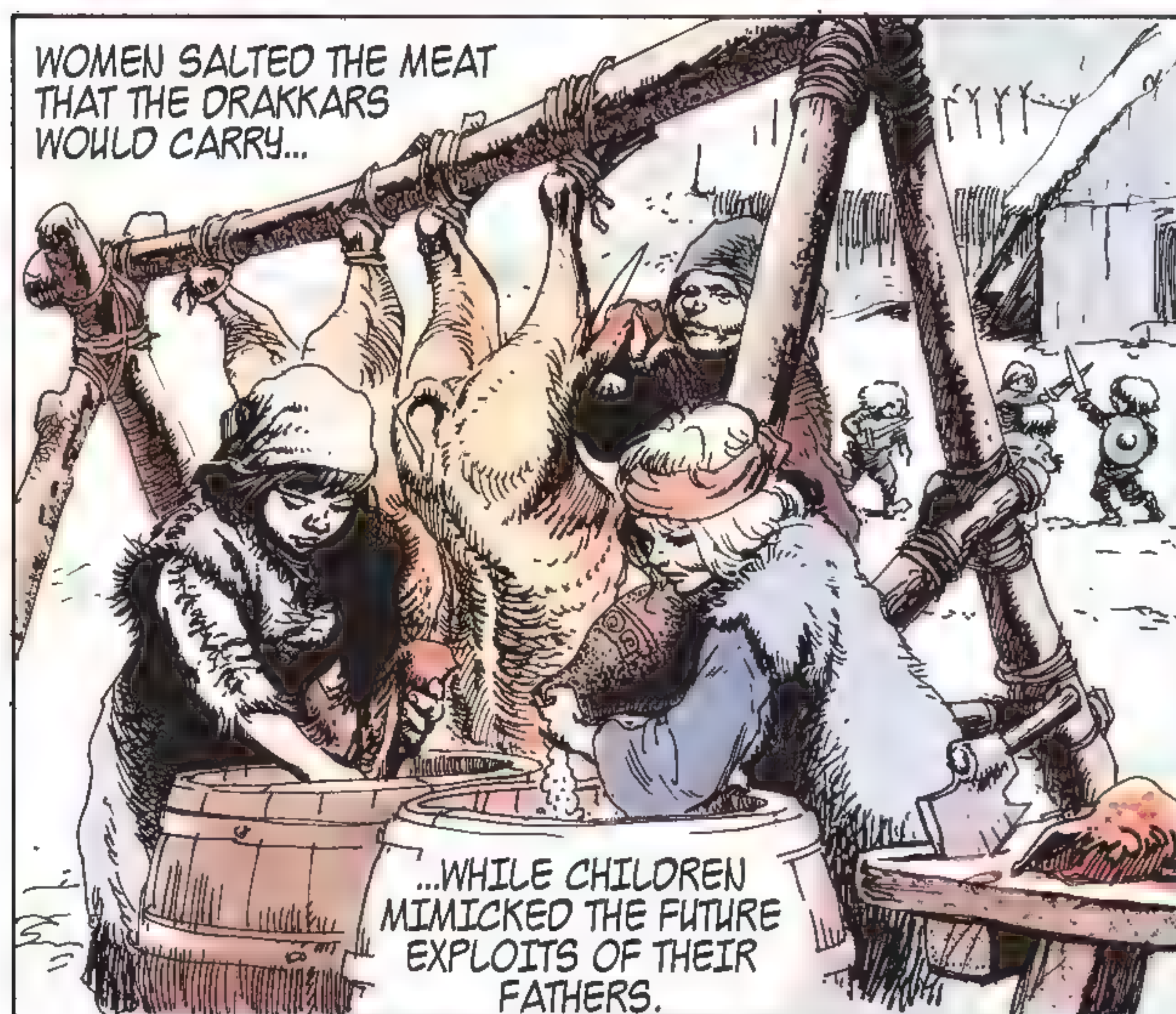


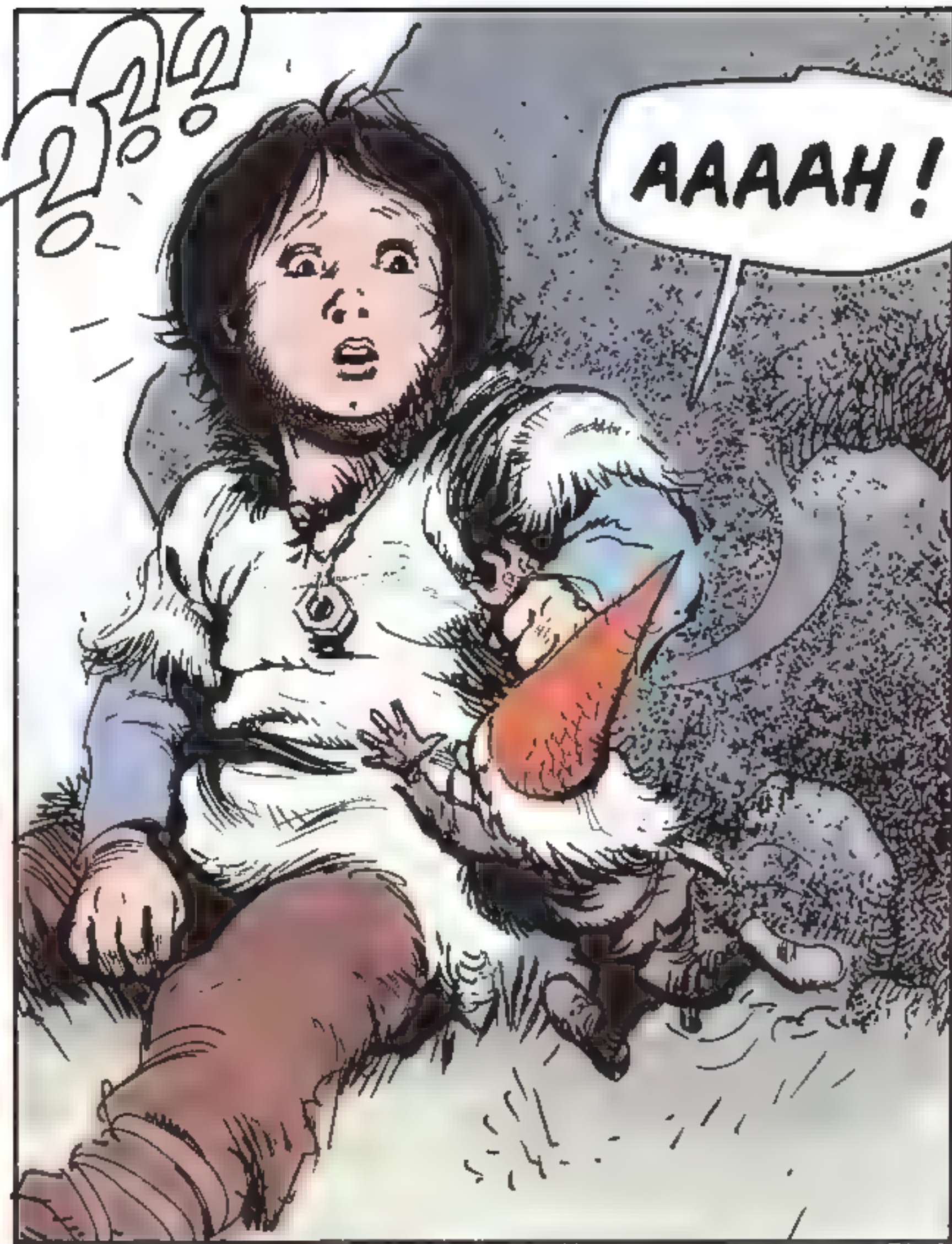
SO THEY GAVE THE TASK TO TJAHZI, THE YOUNGEST AND MOST VALIANT AMONGST THEM, TO SEARCH THE WORLD FOR THE METAL THAT DOESN'T EXIST.

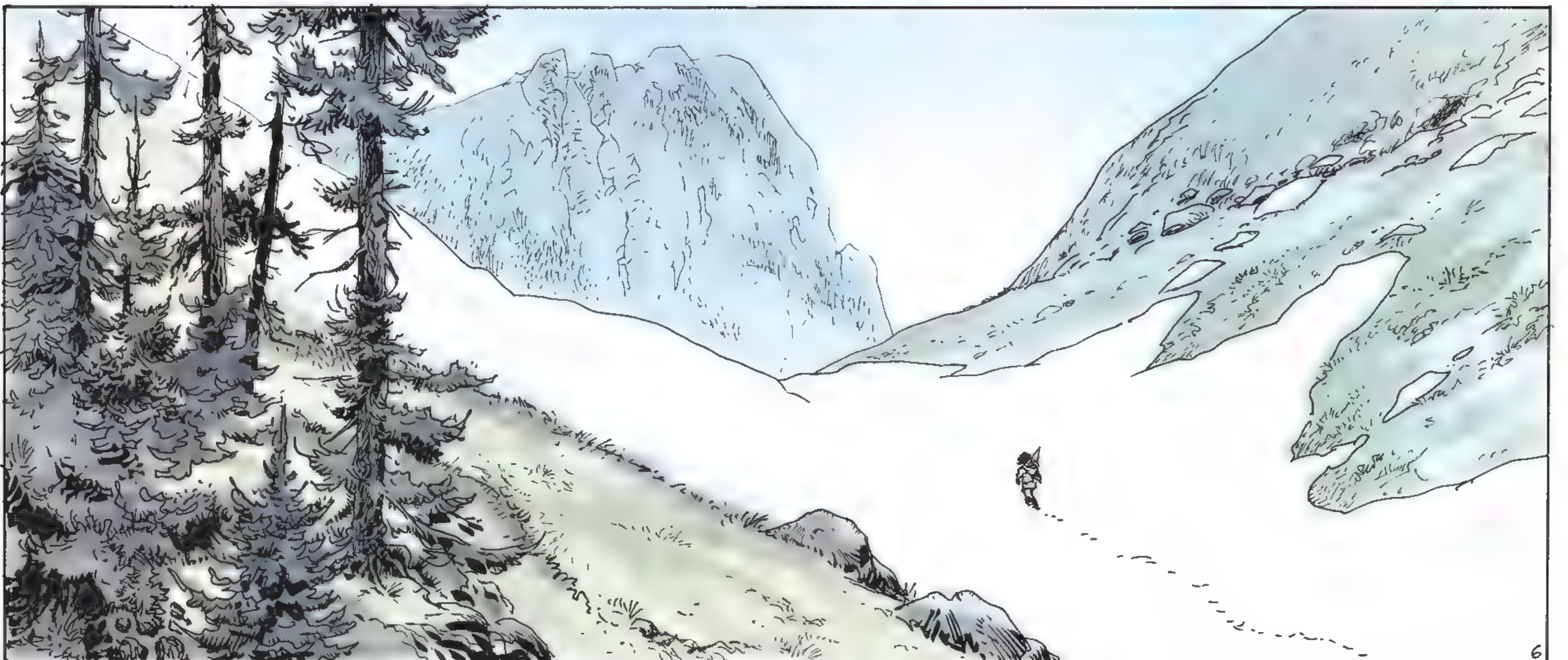
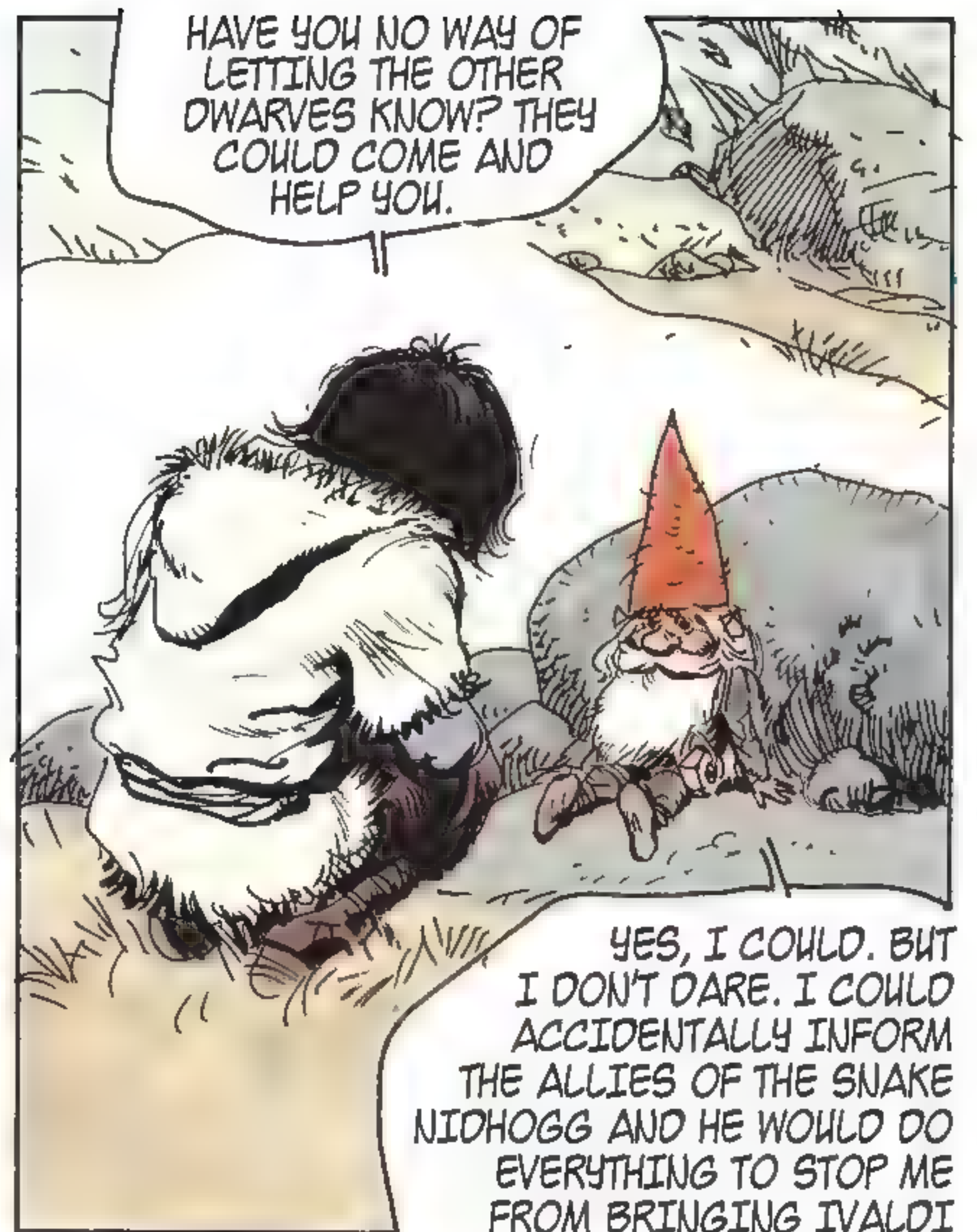


TJAHZI SWORE THAT HE WOULD NOT RETURN WITHOUT HAVING ACCOMPLISHED HIS MISSION. AND AFTER ONE LAST FAREWELL, HE LEFT WITHOUT LOOKING BACK.









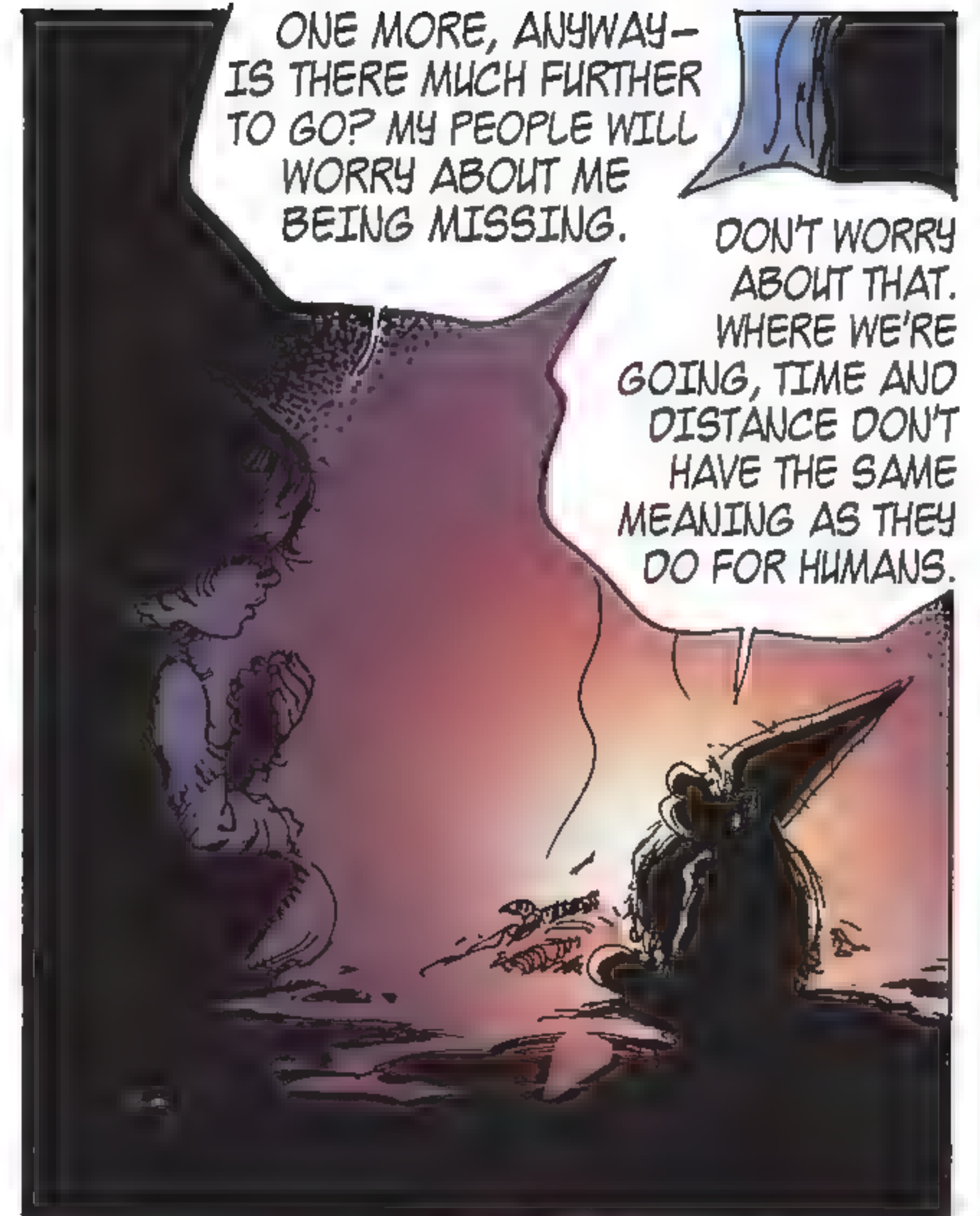


IT'LL SOON BE TOO DARK TO CARRY ON. LET'S STOP HERE FOR THE NIGHT.



WHERE DID YOU FIND THESE FRUITS IN THIS SEASON? THEY ARE DELICIOUS.

IF YOU WANT TO COME ON THIS VOYAGE WITH ME, THORGAL, I THINK THAT IT'S BETTER IF YOU DON'T ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS.



ONE MORE, ANYWAY— IS THERE MUCH FURTHER TO GO? MY PEOPLE WILL WORRY ABOUT ME BEING MISSING.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. WHERE WE'RE GOING, TIME AND DISTANCE DON'T HAVE THE SAME MEANING AS THEY DO FOR HUMANS.



MY TURN TO INTERROGATE YOU, THORGAL. WHERE ON EARTH DOES THIS METAL THAT DOESN'T EXIST COME FROM?

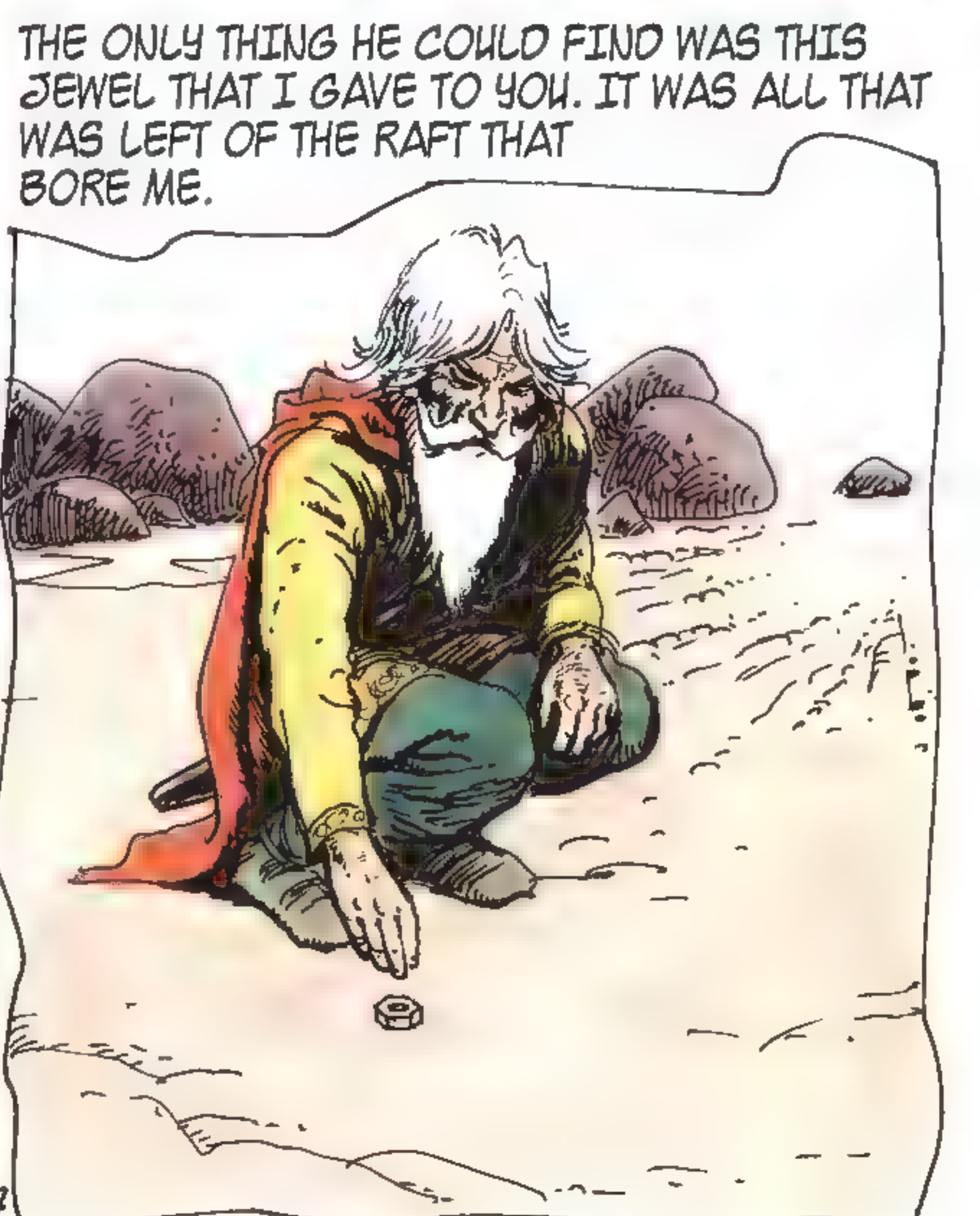
I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THAT MYSELF...



VIKINGS FOUND ME WHEN I WAS A BABY IN A STRANGE RAFT THAT WASHED UP ON THE COASTS OF NORTHLAND. THEIR LEADER, LEIF HARALDSON, TOOK ME OUT AND BROUGHT ME TO HIS VILLAGE.

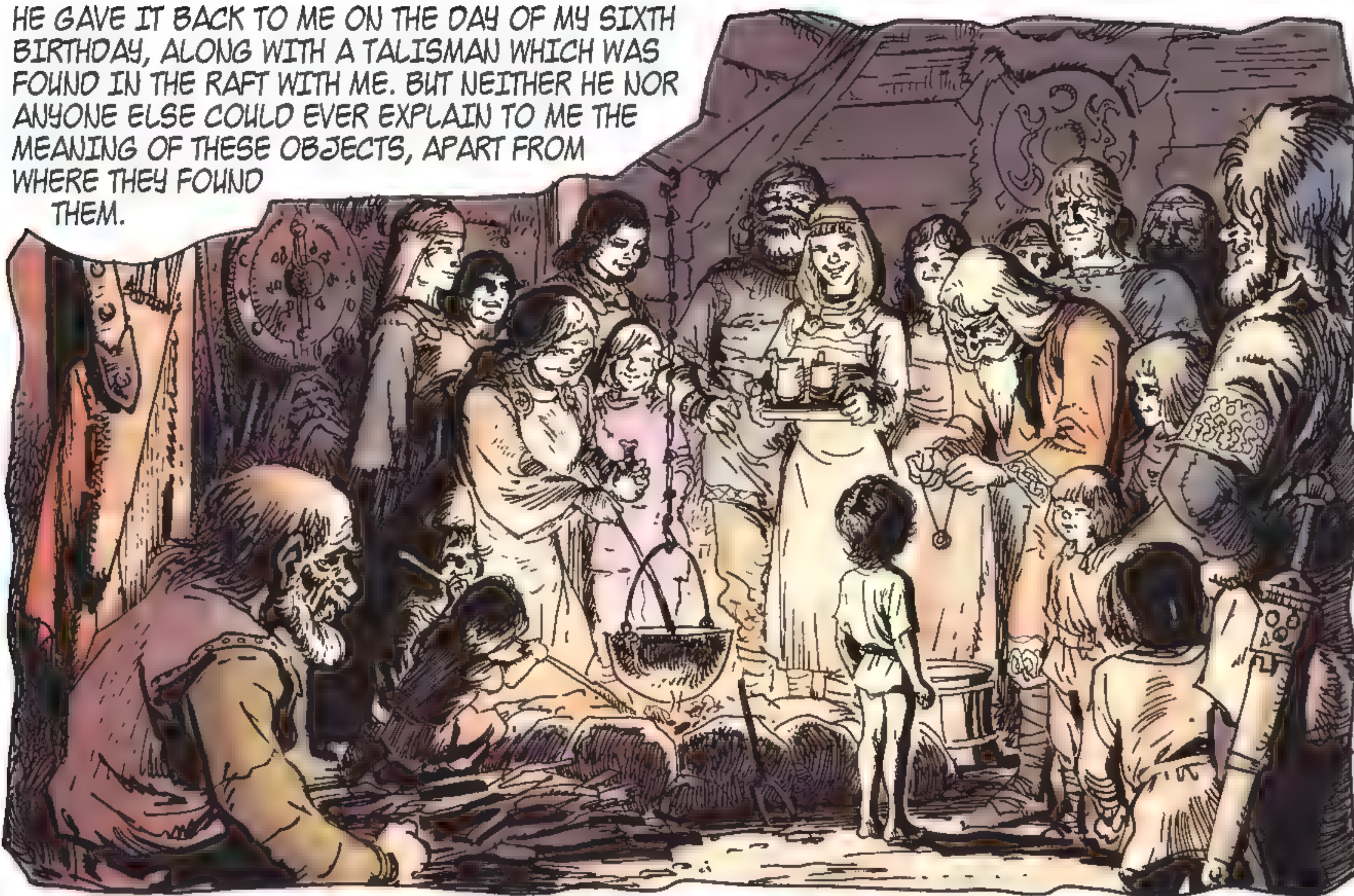


A FEW DAYS LATER, HE WENT BACK TO EXAMINE THE RAFT, BUT IT HAD DISAPPEARED. IN ITS PLACE THE GROUND WAS DEEPLY BURNT. LEIF SUPPOSED THAT THE GOD THOR HAD DESTROYED IT WITH HIS LIGHTNING.



THE ONLY THING HE COULD FIND WAS THIS JEWEL THAT I GAVE TO YOU. IT WAS ALL THAT WAS LEFT OF THE RAFT THAT BORE ME.

HE GAVE IT BACK TO ME ON THE DAY OF MY SIXTH BIRTHDAY, ALONG WITH A TALISMAN WHICH WAS FOUND IN THE RAFT WITH ME. BUT NEITHER HE NOR ANYONE ELSE COULD EVER EXPLAIN TO ME THE MEANING OF THESE OBJECTS, APART FROM WHERE THEY FOUND THEM.

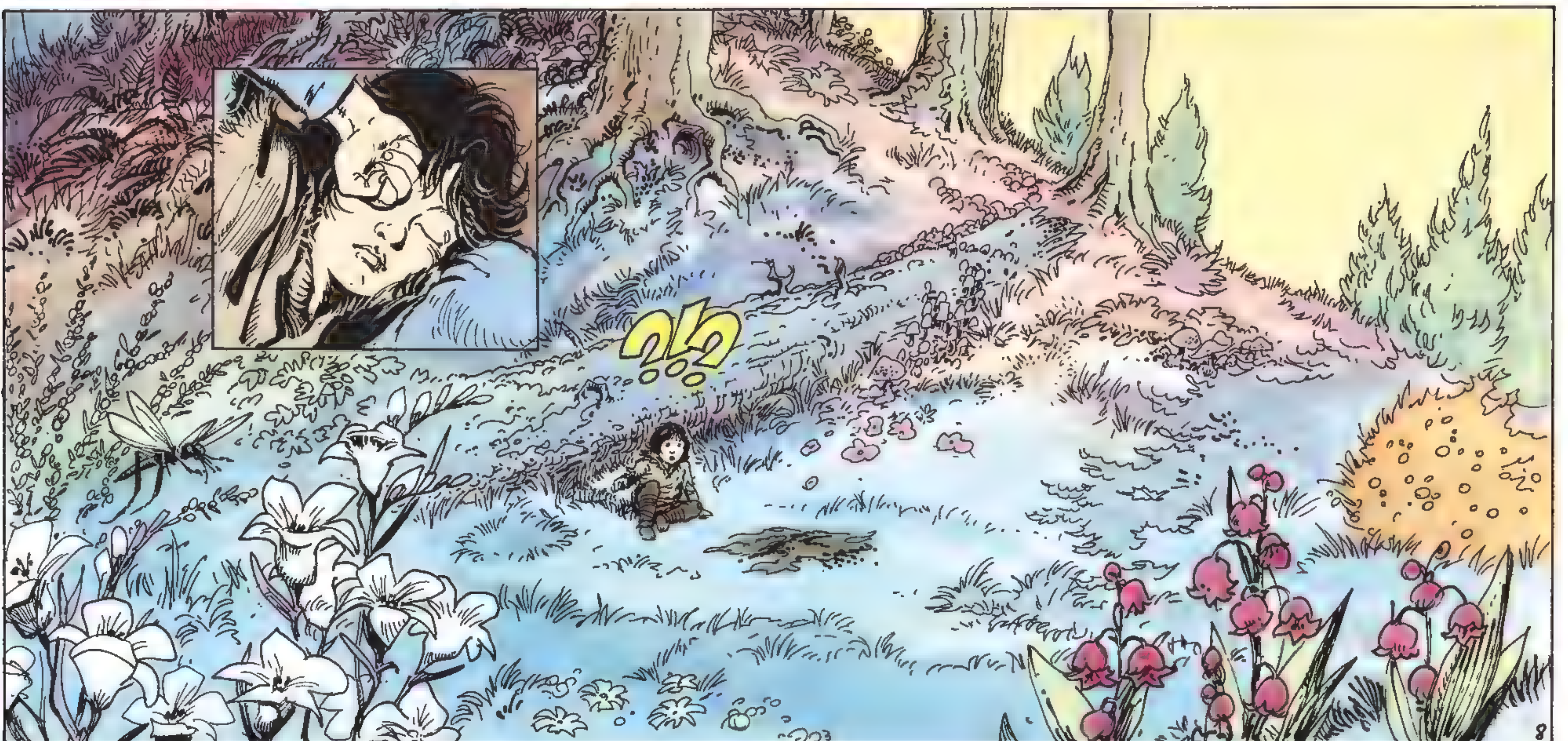


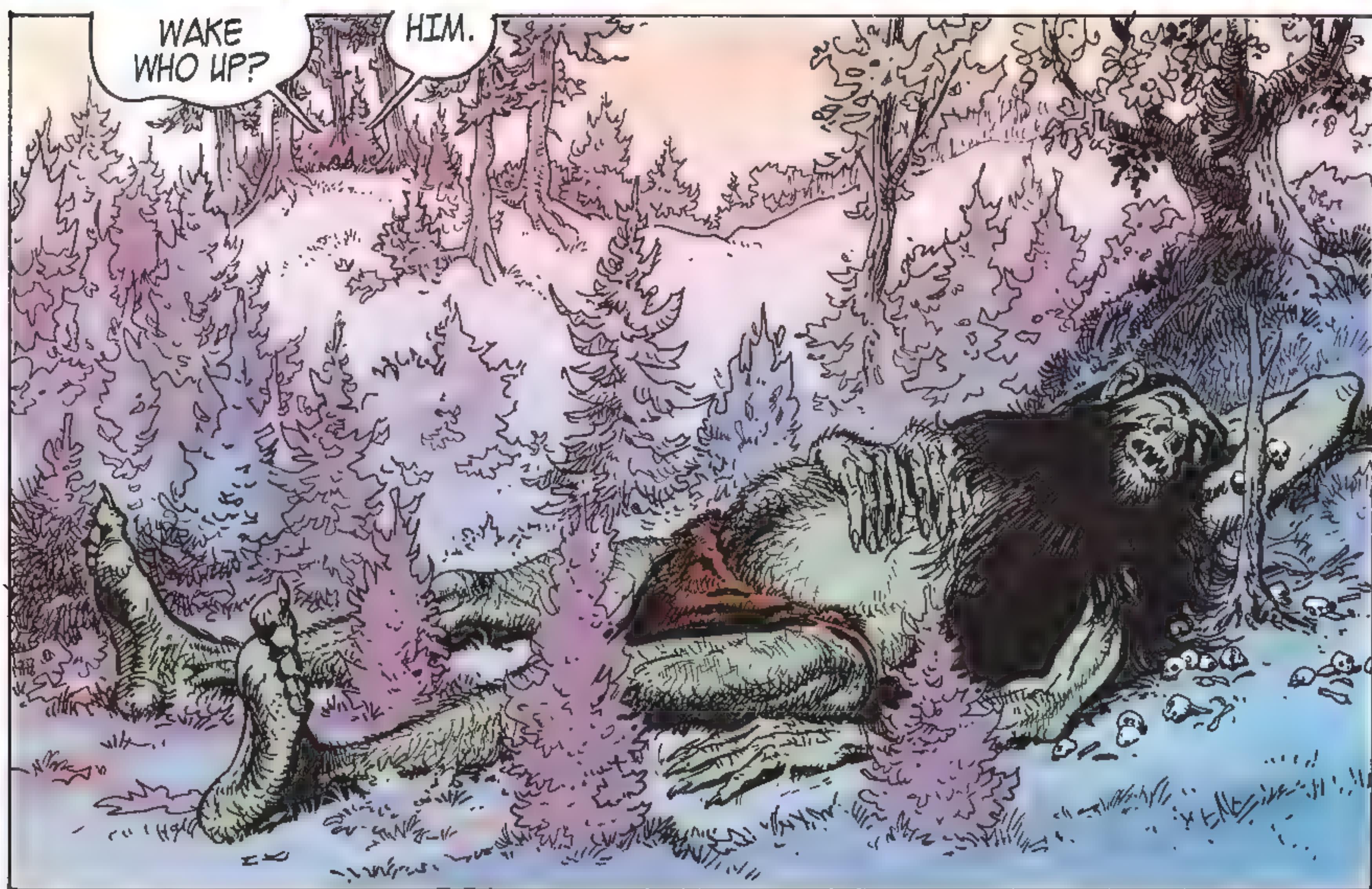
SO, TĴAHZI, THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO TELL.

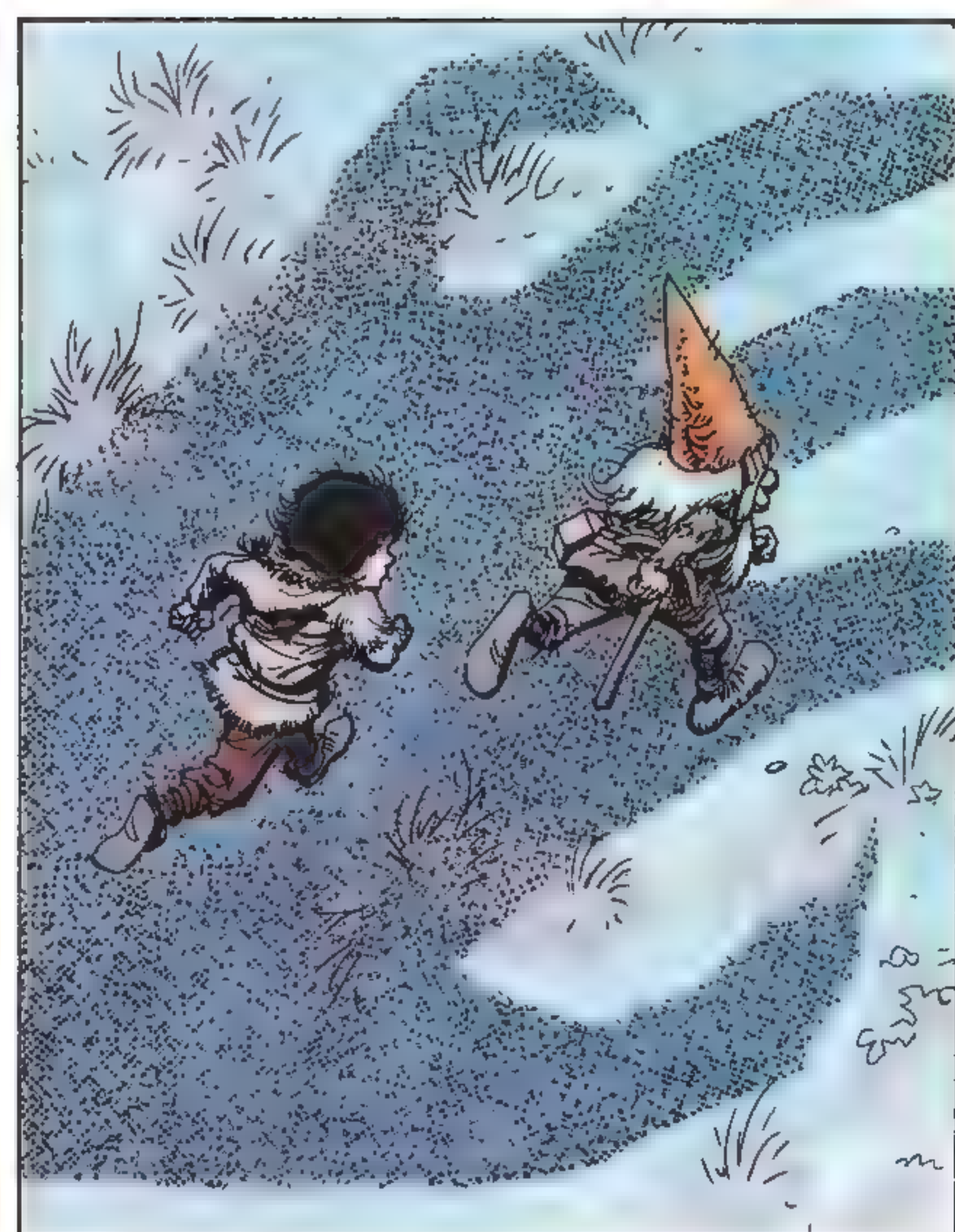


COULD IT BE POSSIBLE THAT YOUR RAFT CAME FROM THE STARS? IN THAT CASE, LITTLE THORGAL, YOU WOULDN'T REALLY BE A HUMAN, EVEN IF YOU LOOK LIKE ONE.

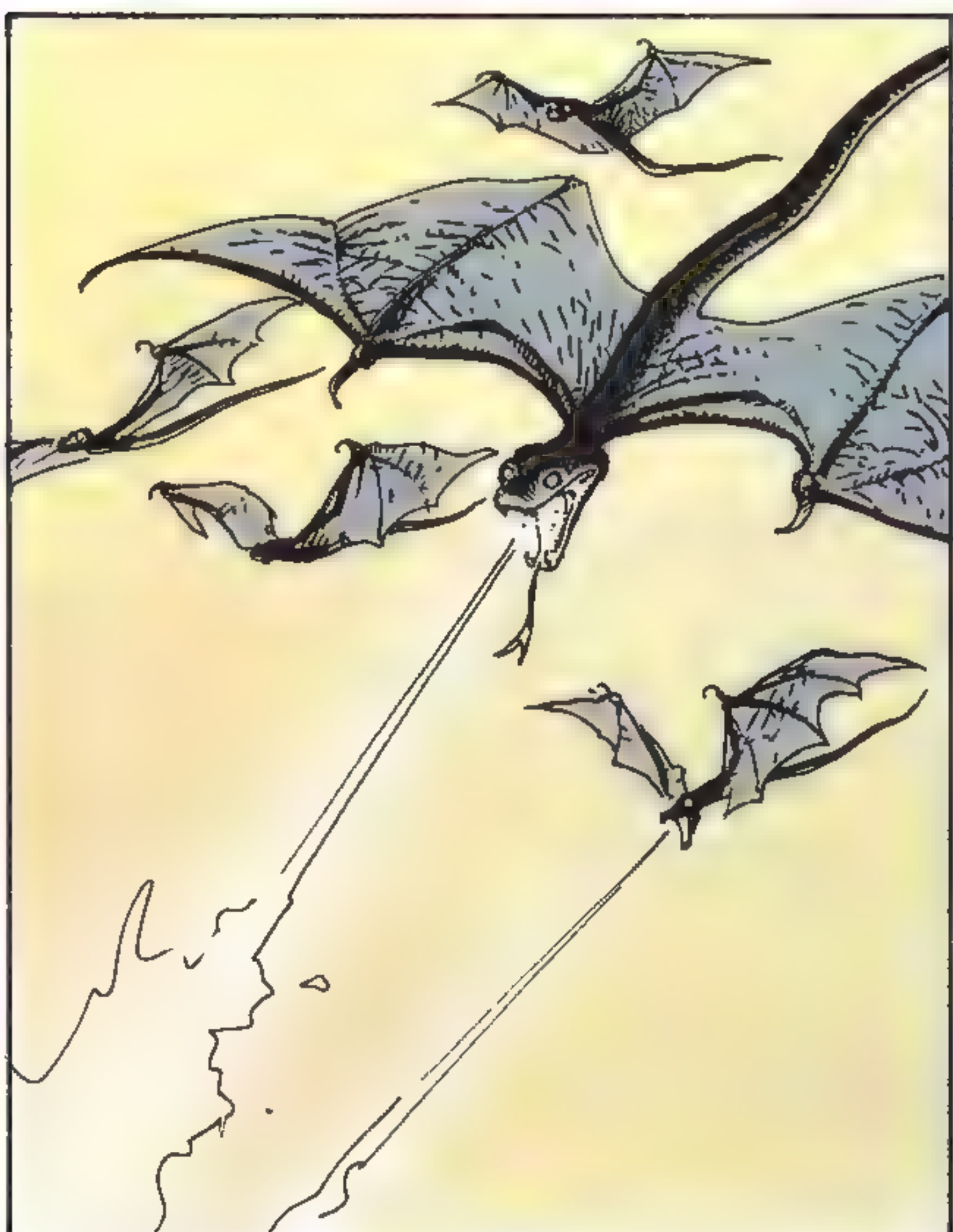
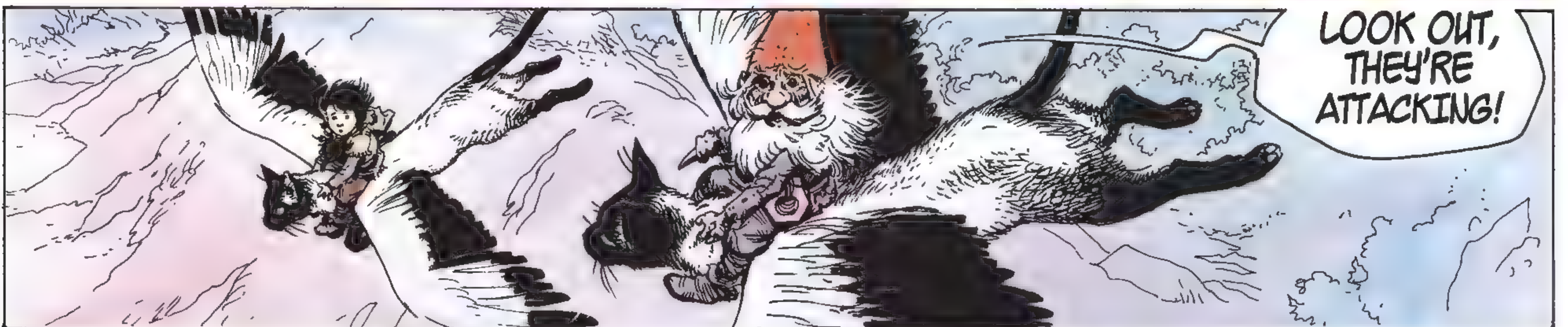
UNFORTUNATELY, DWARVES DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE STARS, AND I CAN EXPLAIN IT TO YOU NO BETTER THAN YOUR PEOPLE COULD... HMMM, IT SEEMS I'D DO BETTER TO STOP TALKING AND TRY TO SLEEP TOO.

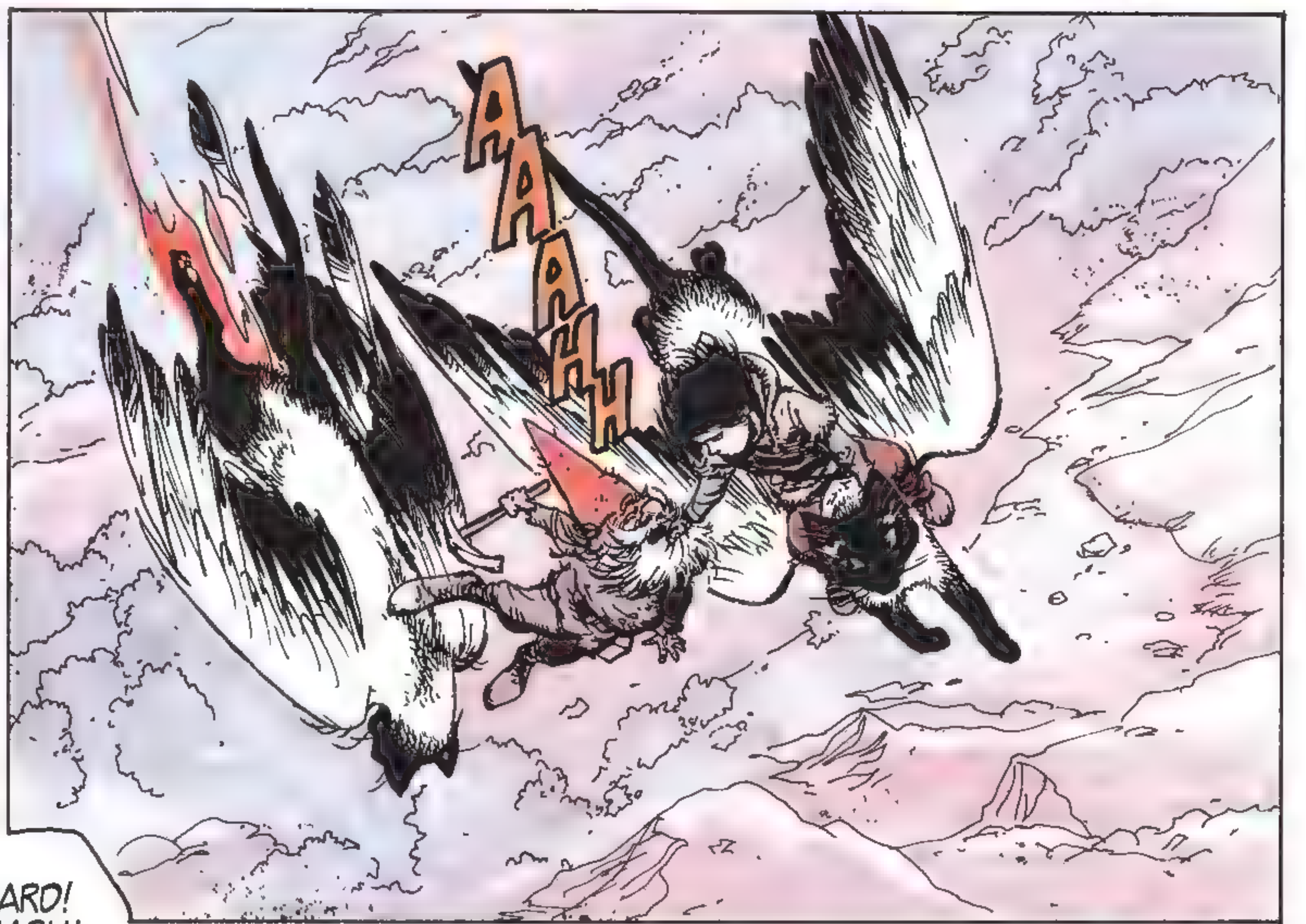


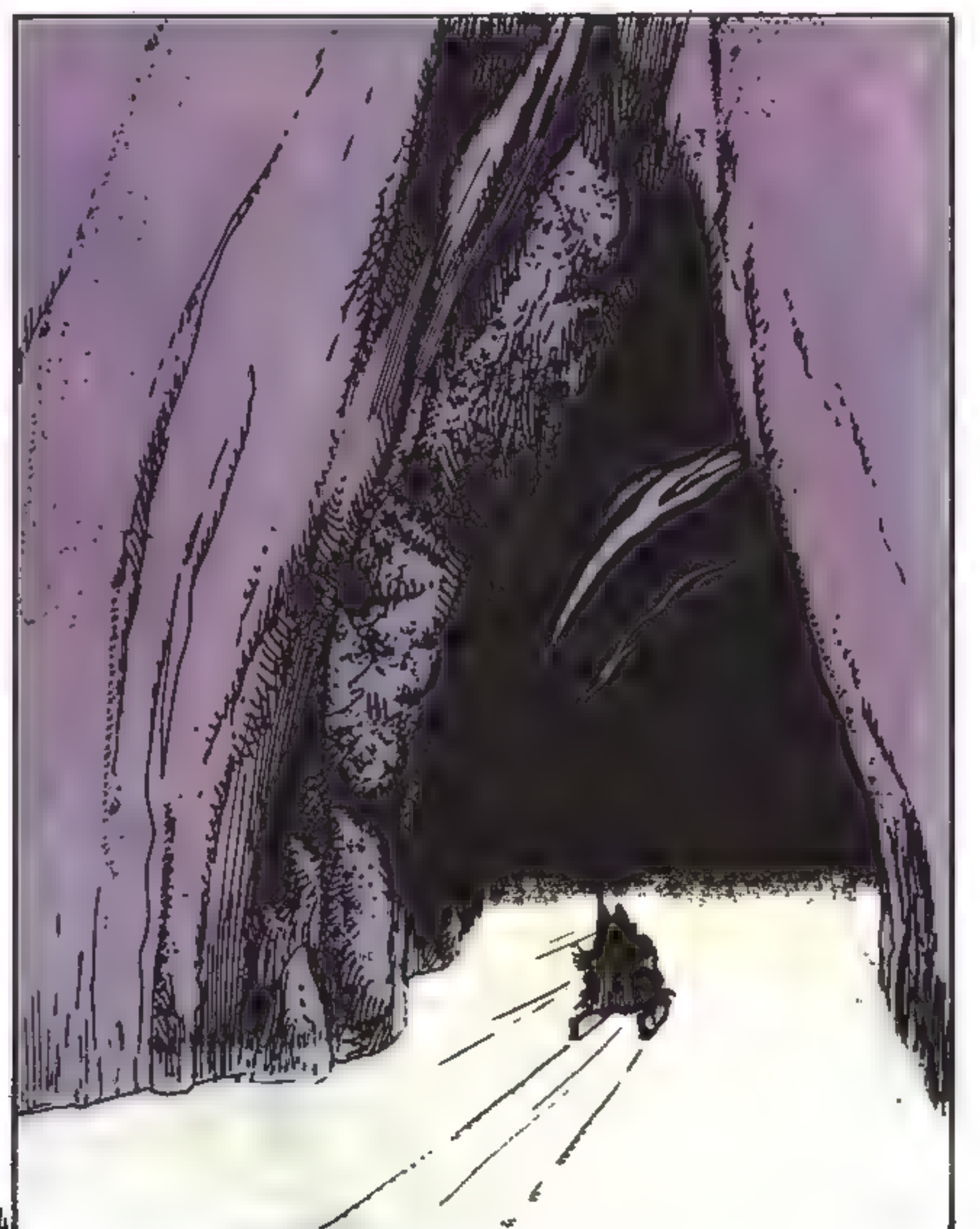
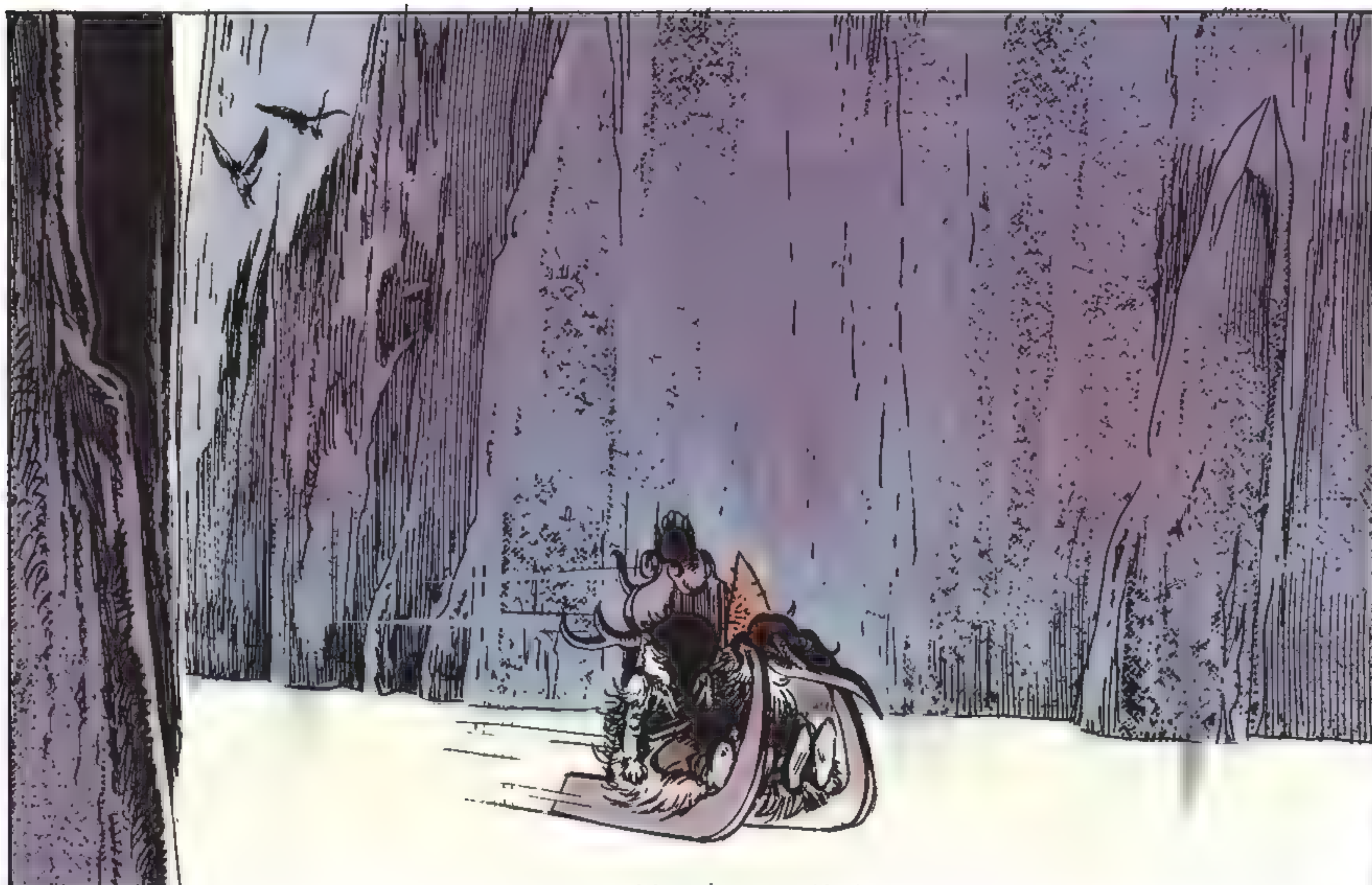
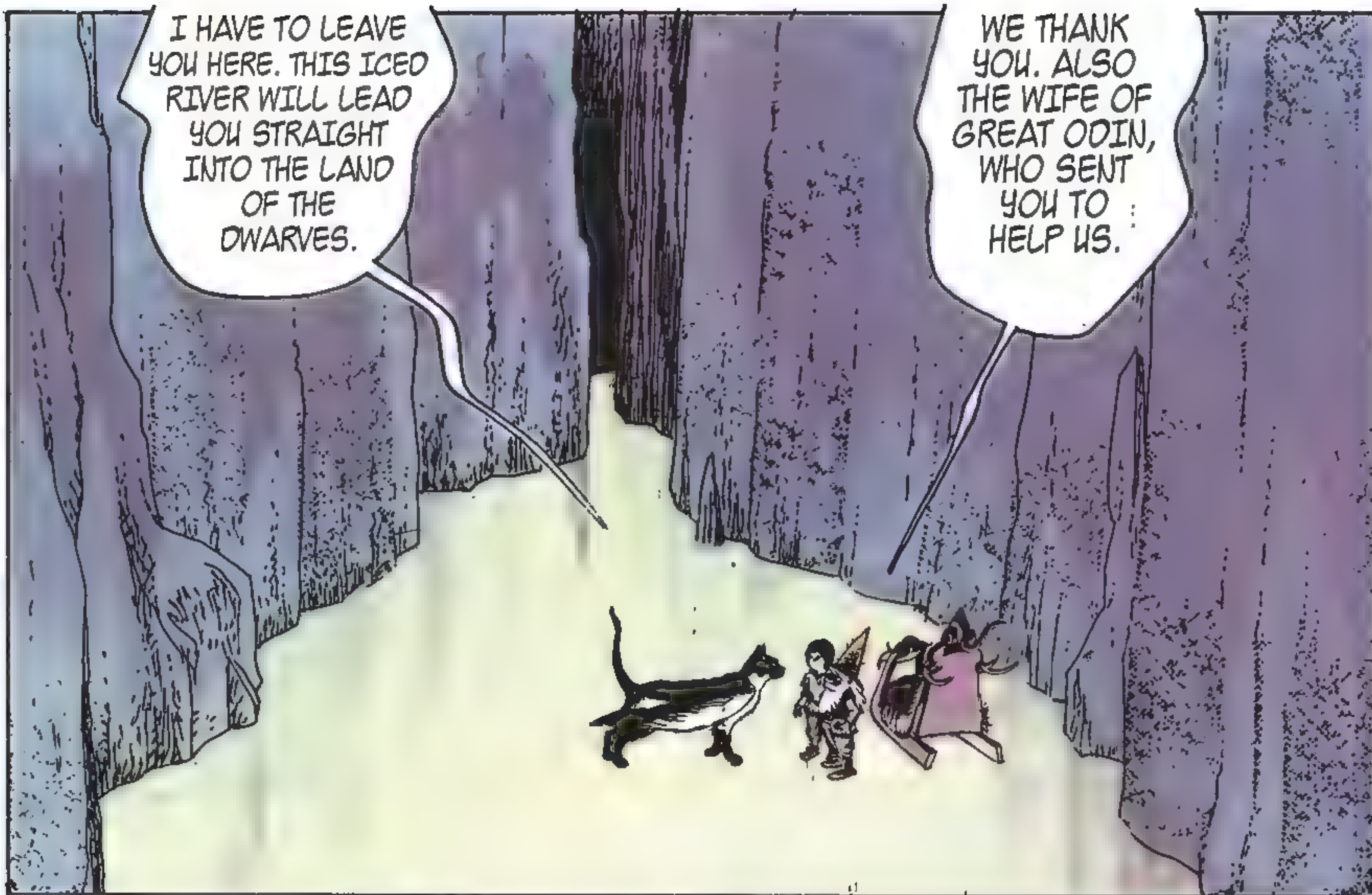


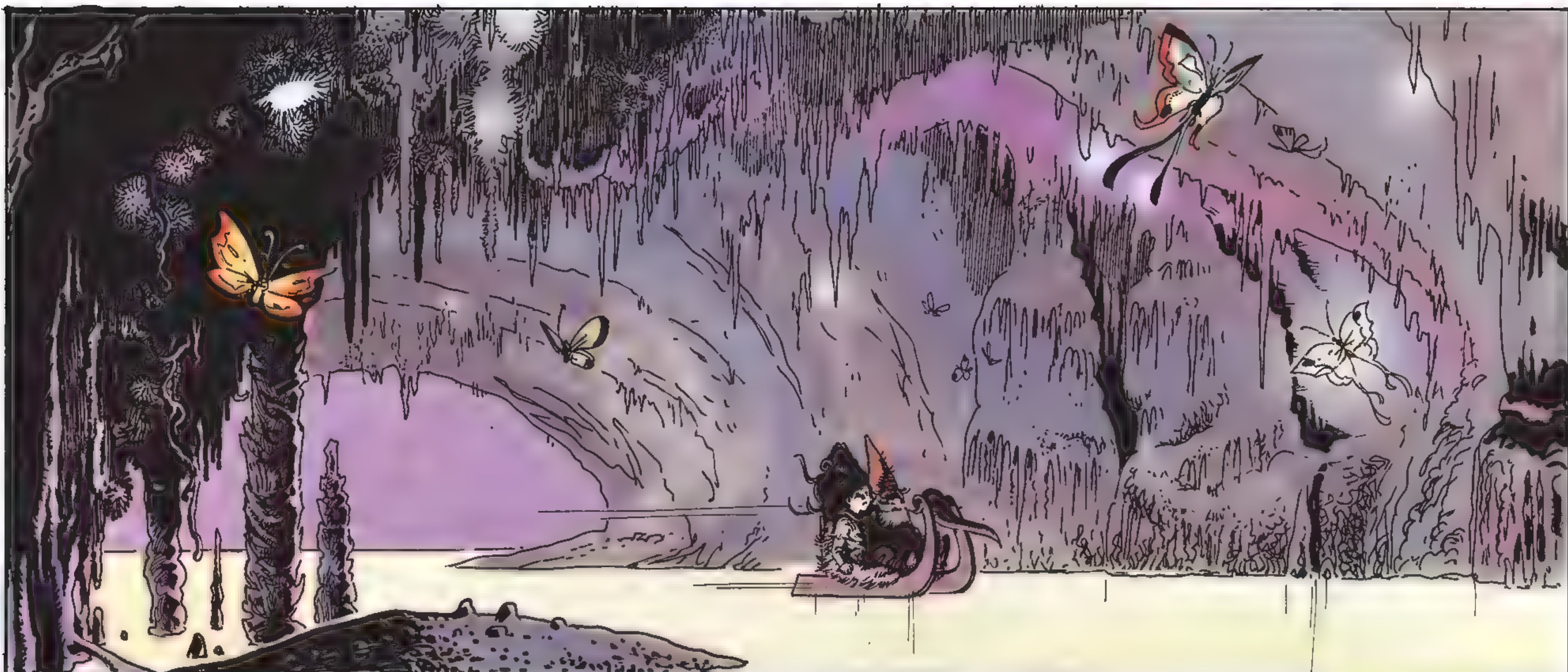










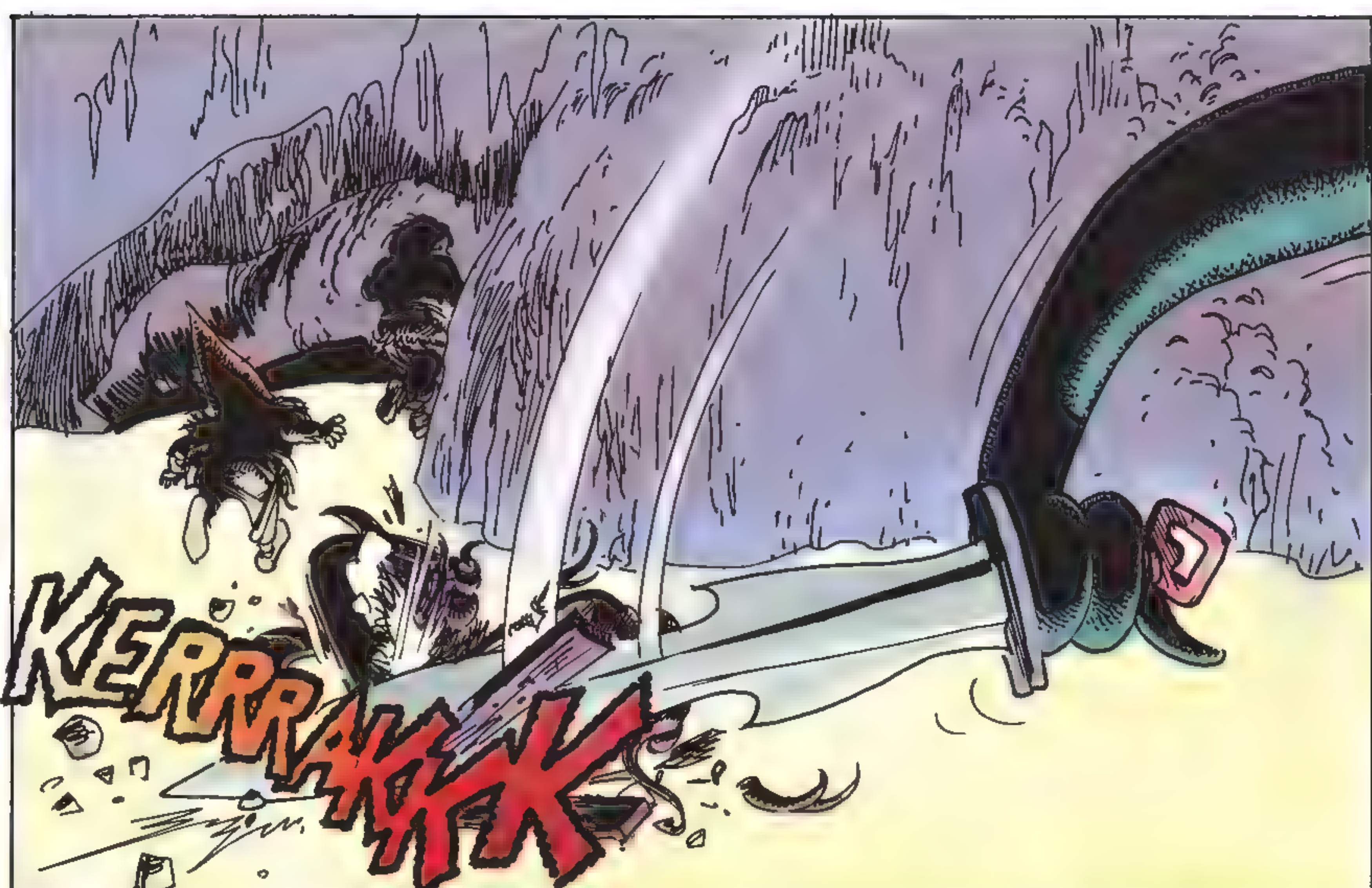


AT THE BORDER OF MY COUNTRY, THORGAL. FINALLY, AFTER SO MANY, MANY YEARS, I WILL SOON BE BACK HOME.





THORGAL, THIS... THIS IS THE ULTIMATE TEST... THE TWELVE TAILS OF THE SERPENT NIDHOGG IN PERSON!!



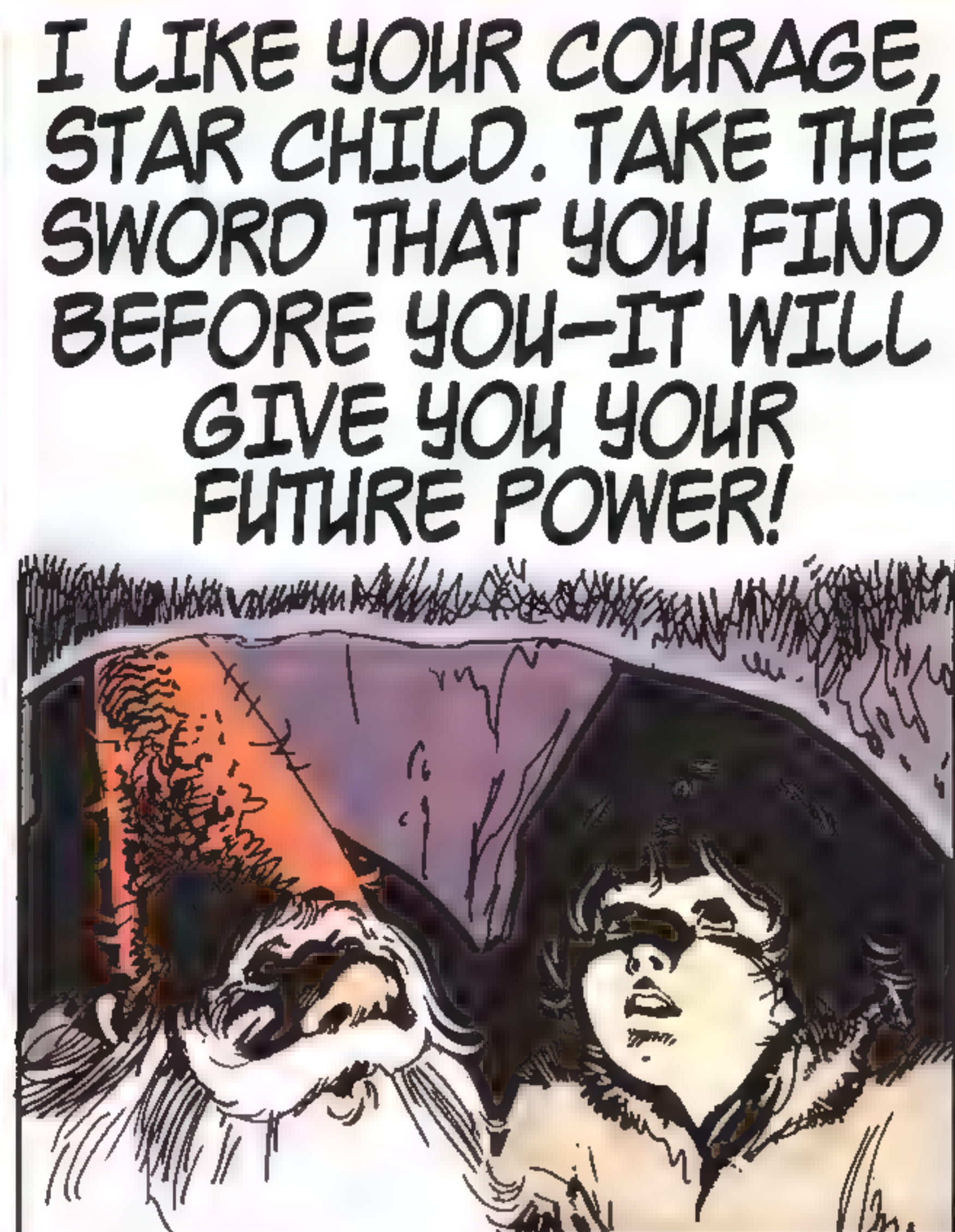
ALL IS LOST! THIS MONSTER IS BLOCKING THE ONLY WAY TO THE ENTRANCE INTO THE LAND.

I... I WILL ATTACK IT. YOU TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PASS BY.

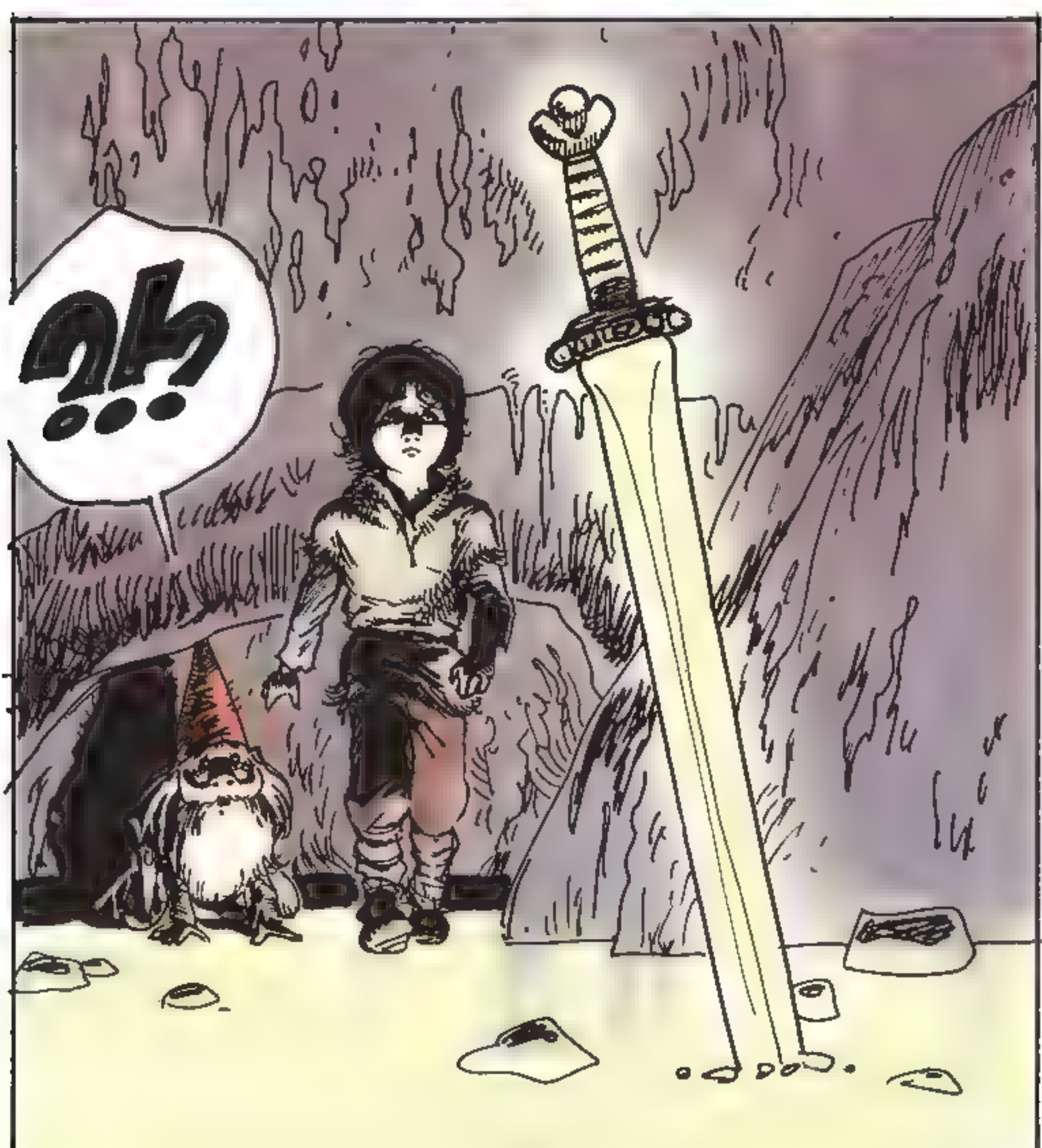
ATTACK IT!? ATTACK THAT!? ARE YOU MAD!? HOW COULD YOU MANAGE THAT? EACH ONE OF THOSE SWORDS IS COVERED IN DEADLY POISON...



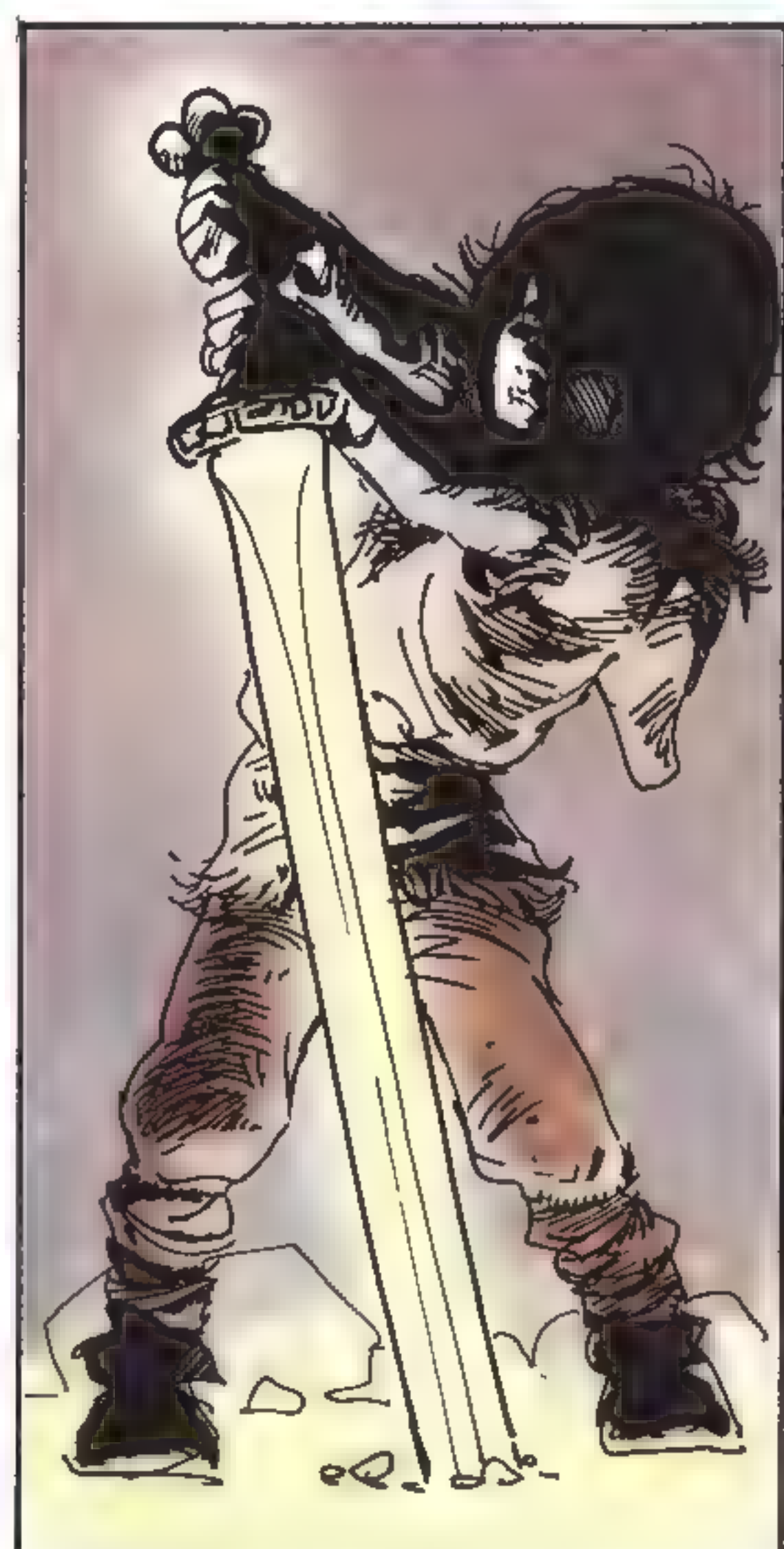
I DON'T KNOW, TJAHZI, BUT I HAVE TO TRY. IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE.

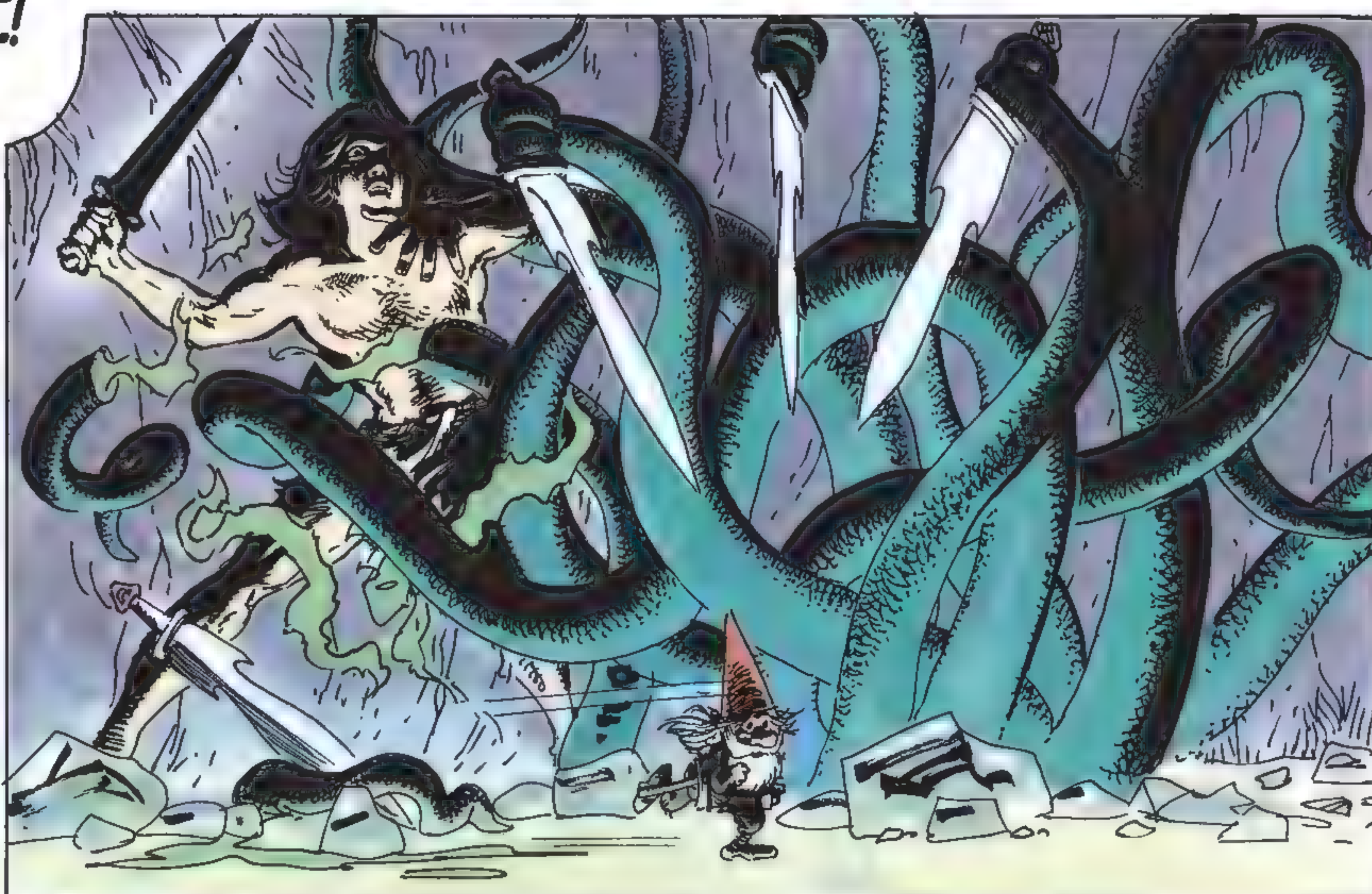
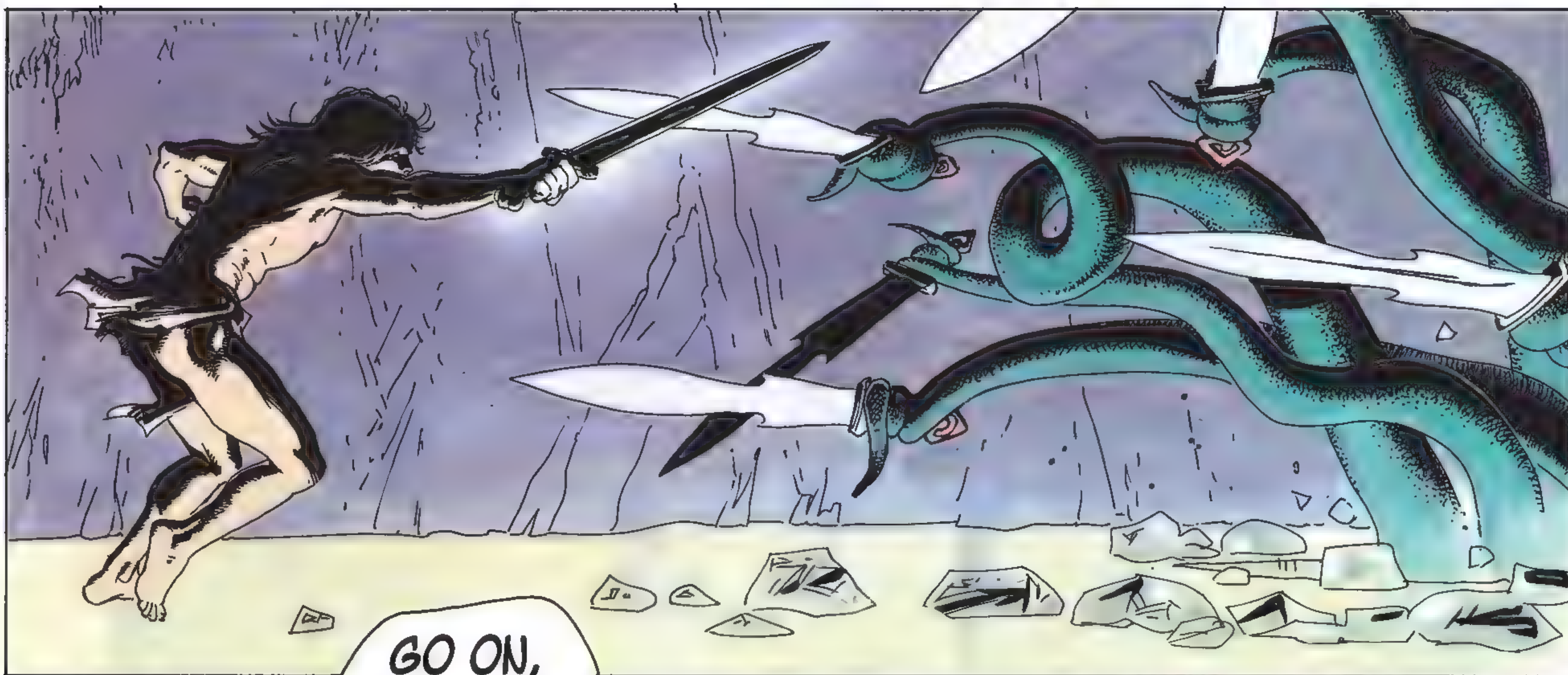


I LIKE YOUR COURAGE, STAR CHILD. TAKE THE SWORD THAT YOU FIND BEFORE YOU-IT WILL GIVE YOU YOUR FUTURE POWER!

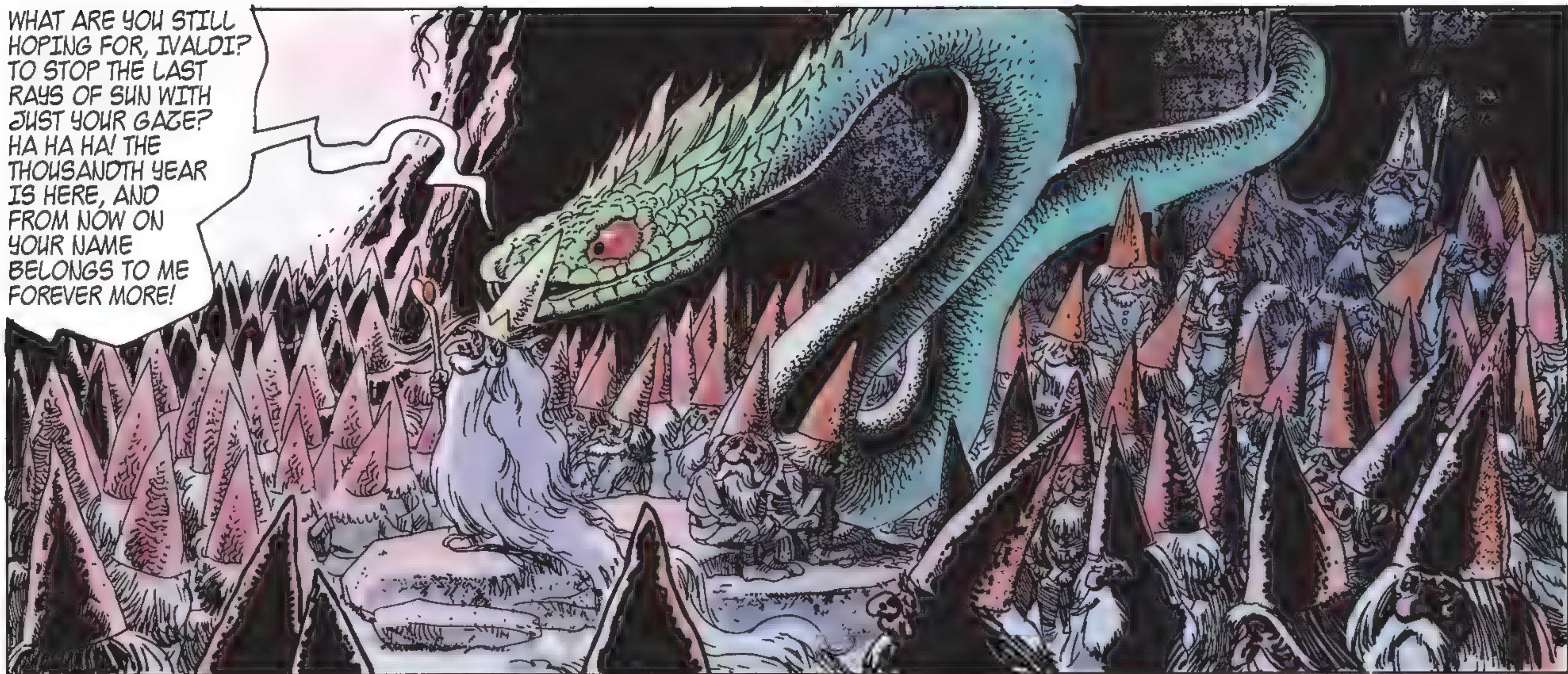


!!?





WHAT ARE YOU STILL
HOPING FOR, IVALDI?
TO STOP THE LAST
RAYS OF SUN WITH
JUST YOUR GAZE?
HA HA HA! THE
THOUSANDTH YEAR
IS HERE, AND
FROM NOW ON
YOUR NAME
BELONGS TO ME
FOREVER MORE!



NO!



HERE IS THE OBJECT YOU
ASKED FOR, SERPENT
NIDHOGG: A JEWEL MADE
FROM THE METAL THAT
DOES NOT EXIST!



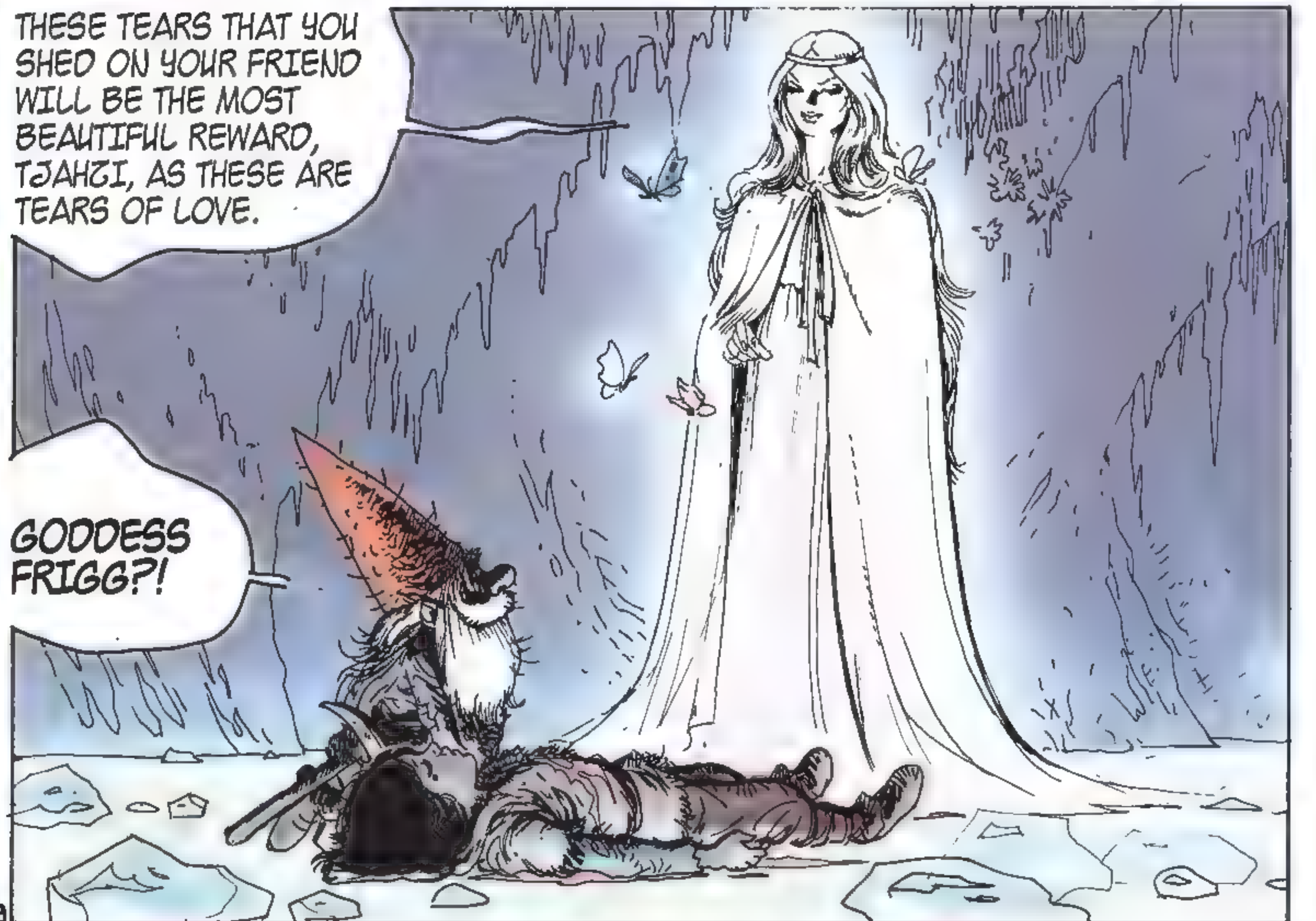
CURSES!





THESE TEARS THAT YOU SHED ON YOUR FRIEND WILL BE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL REWARD, TJAHZI, AS THESE ARE TEARS OF LOVE.

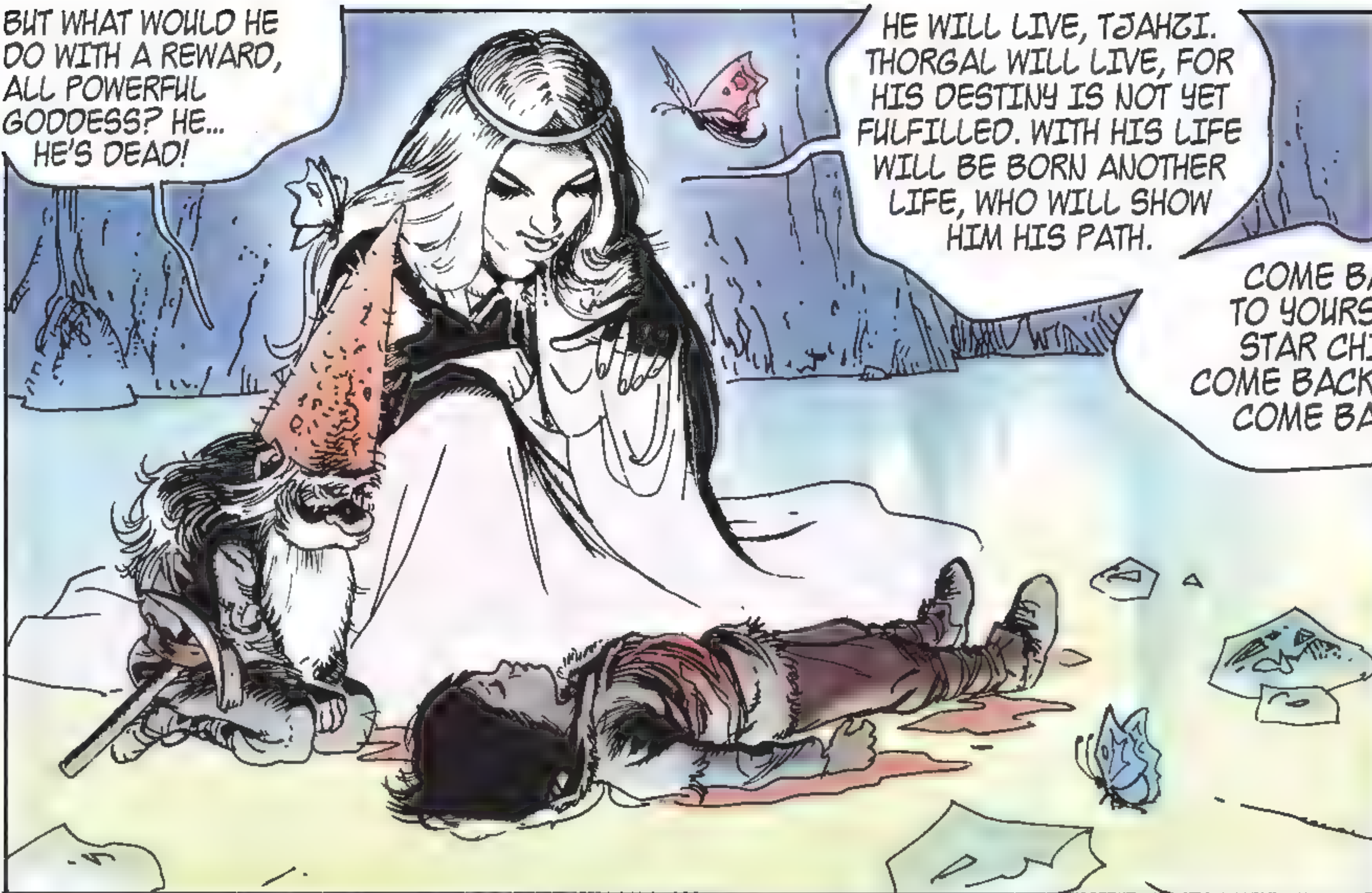
GODDESS FRIGG?!



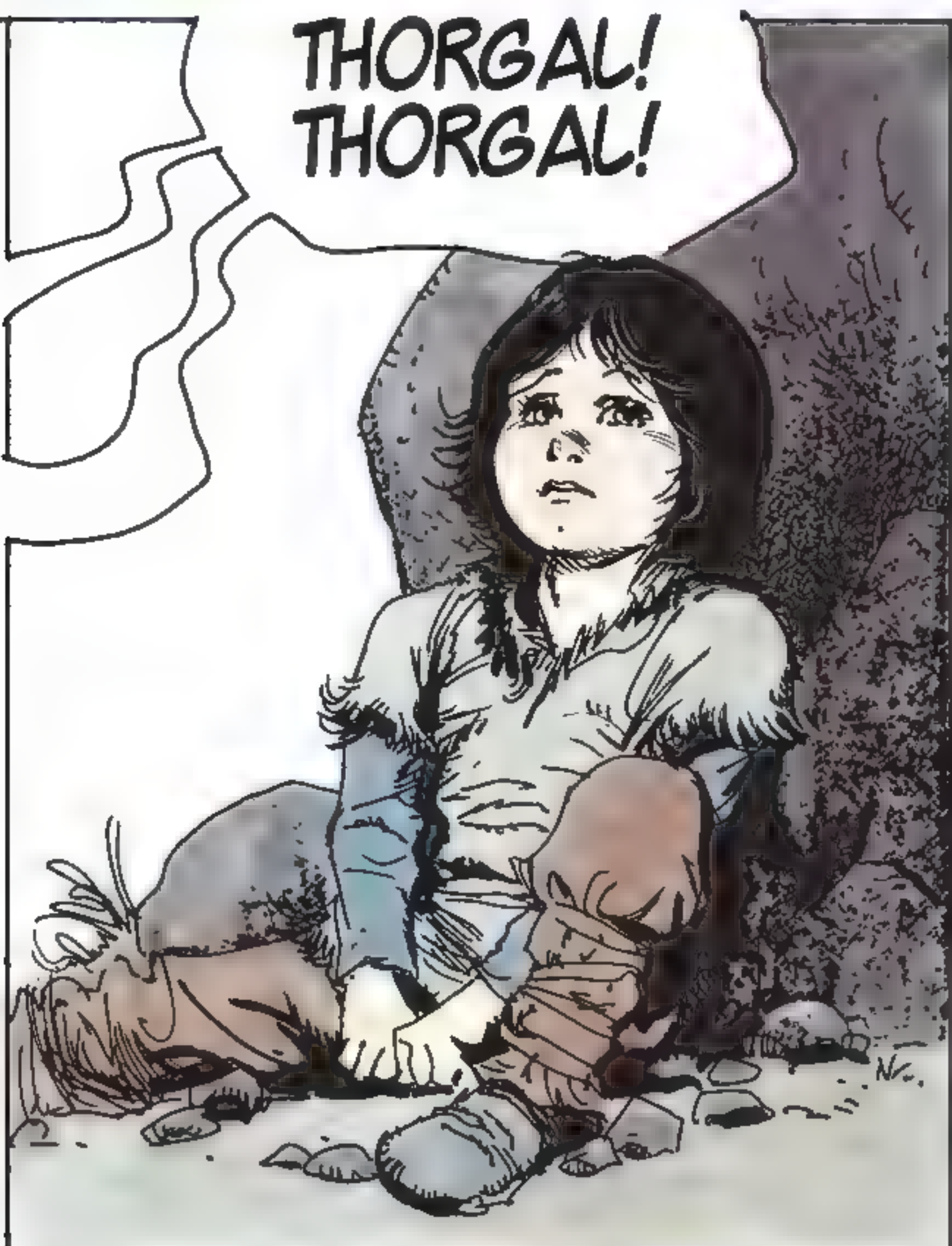
BUT WHAT WOULD HE
DO WITH A REWARD,
ALL POWERFUL
GODDESS? HE...
HE'S DEAD!

HE WILL LIVE, TJAHZI.
THORGAL WILL LIVE, FOR
HIS DESTINY IS NOT YET
FULFILLED. WITH HIS LIFE
WILL BE BORN ANOTHER
LIFE, WHO WILL SHOW
HIM HIS PATH.

COME BACK
TO YOURSELF,
STAR CHILD.
COME BACK HOME.
COME BACK...



THORGAL!
THORGAL!



WHERE
DID YOU
GO?

WE WERE
LOOKING FOR
YOU EVERY-
WHERE...

SOMETHING
AMAZING
HAPPENED...



GANDALF-THE-MAD'S
WIFE HAS HAD
A LITTLE GIRL...

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY
FOUND IN EACH OF THE BABY'S
PALMS WHEN THEY WERE
UNCLENCHED?...

A PEARL IN
THE SHAPE OF A
TEAR! CAN YOU
IMAGINE?!

AH... AND
WHAT DID THEY
CALL THIS PEARL
GIRL?

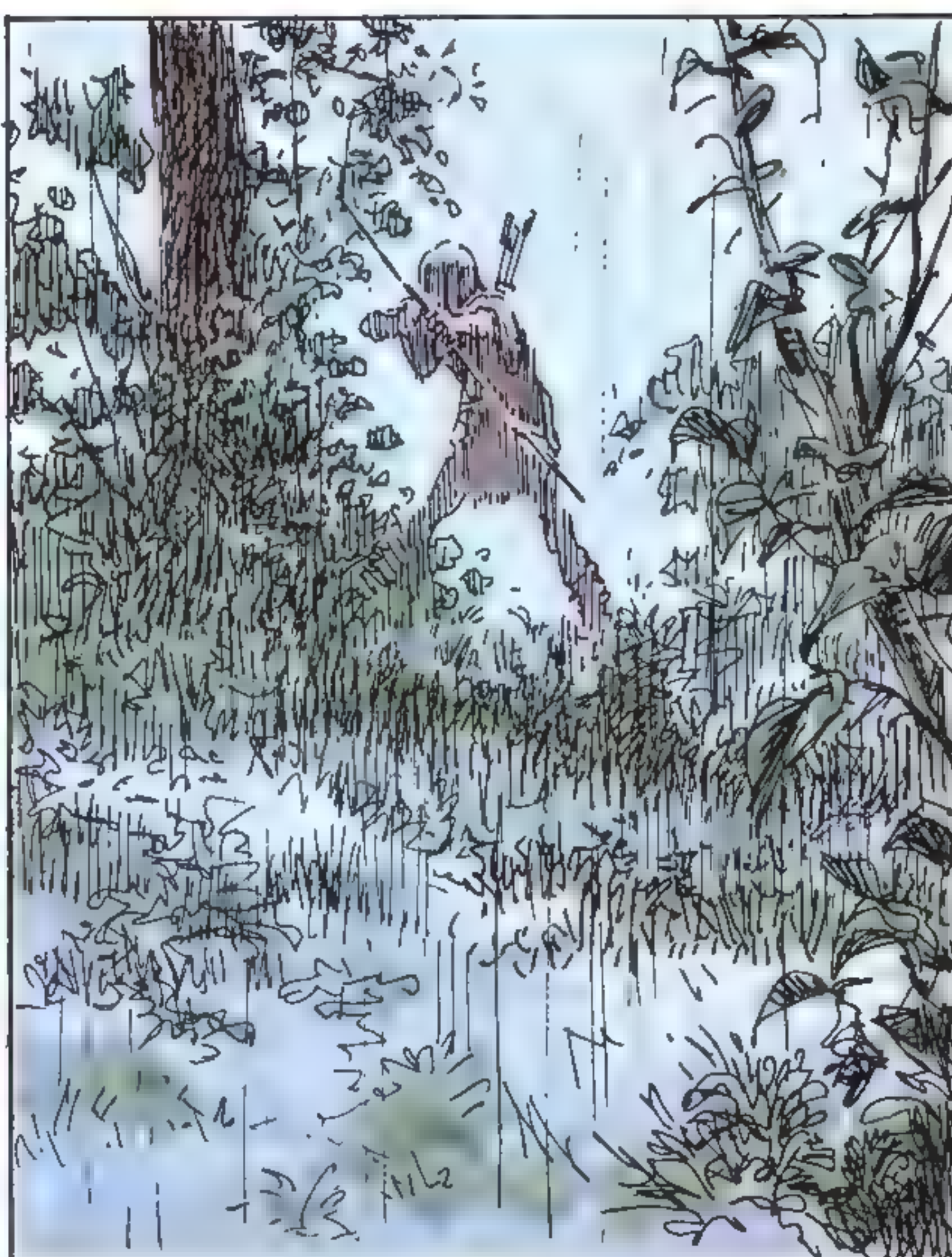
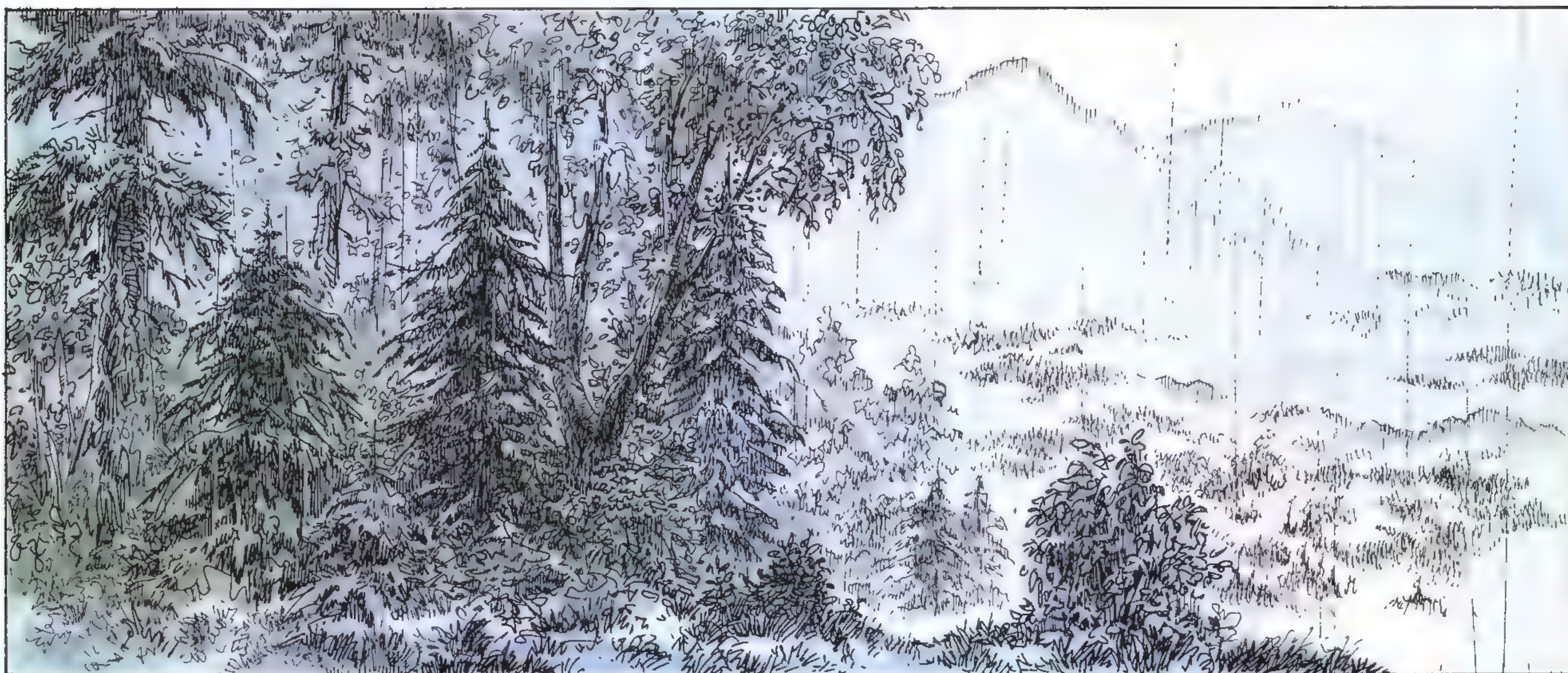


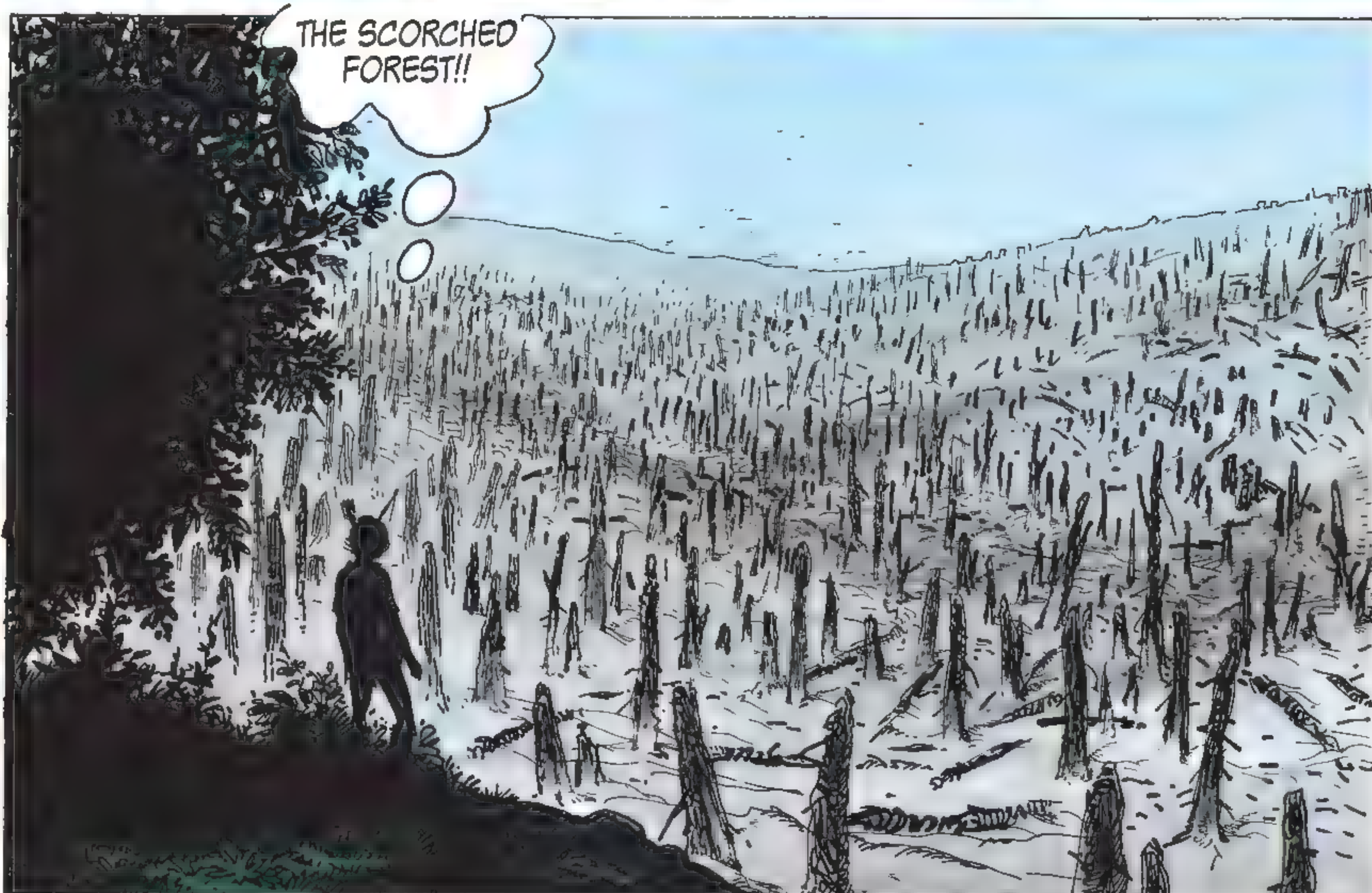
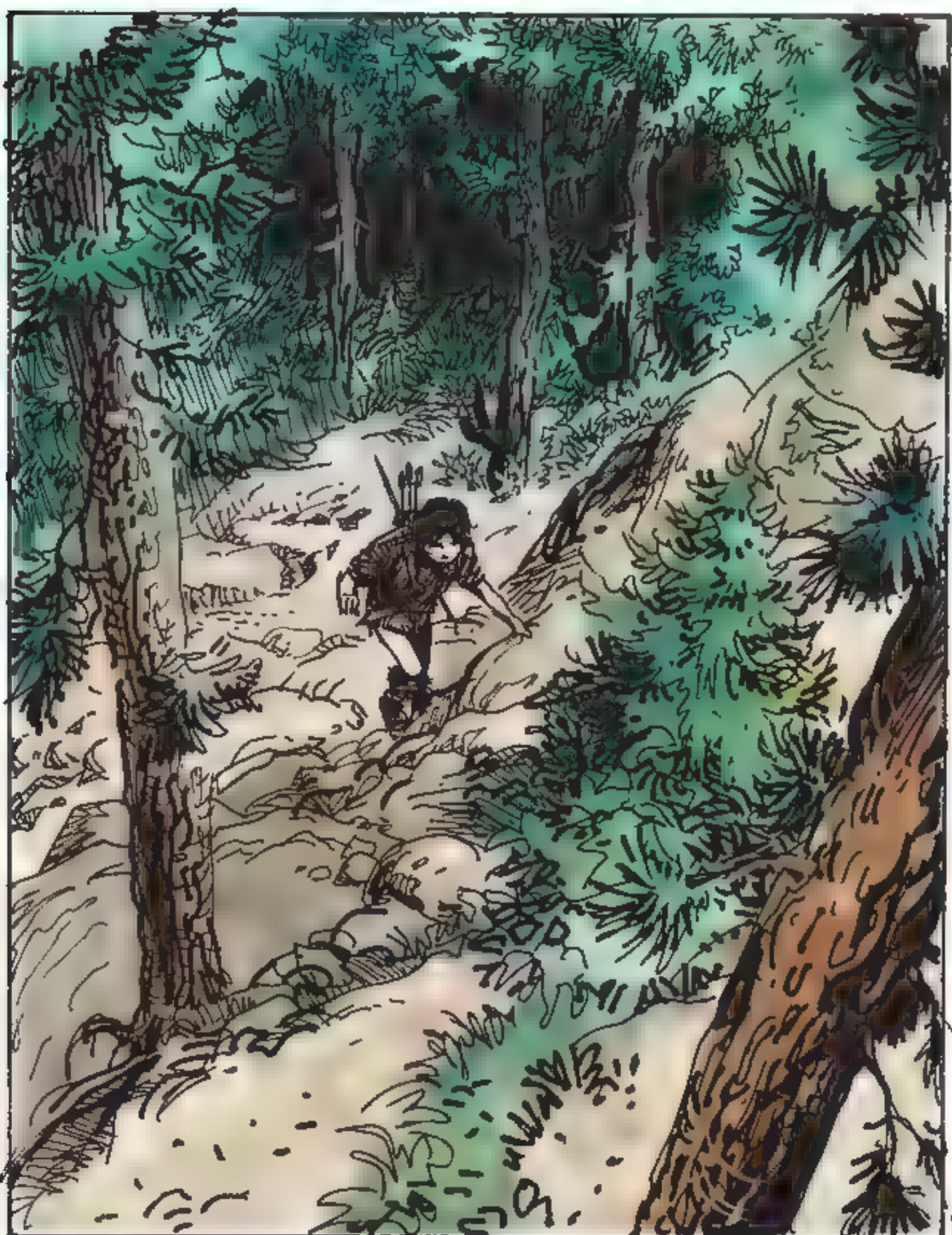
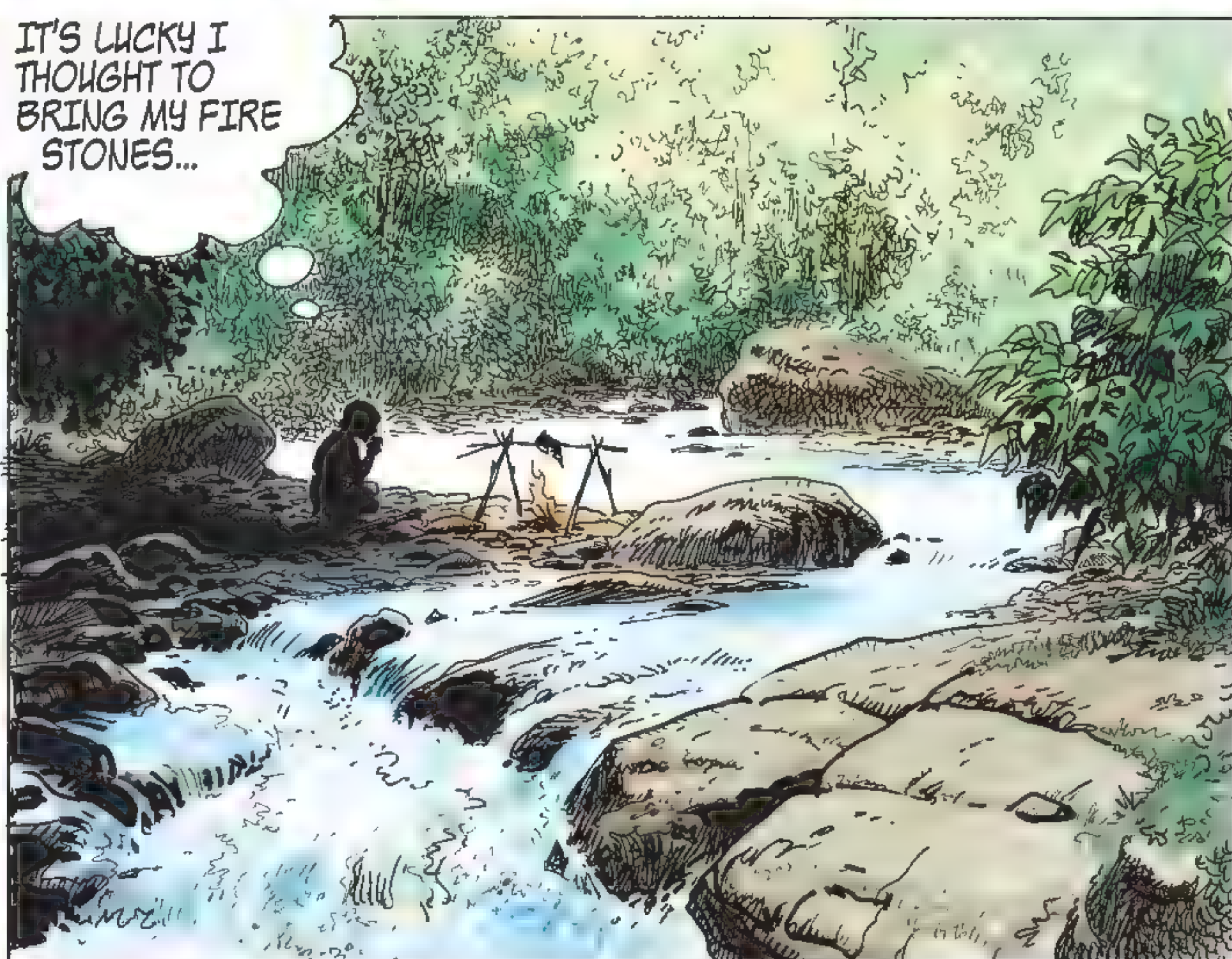
AARICIA.

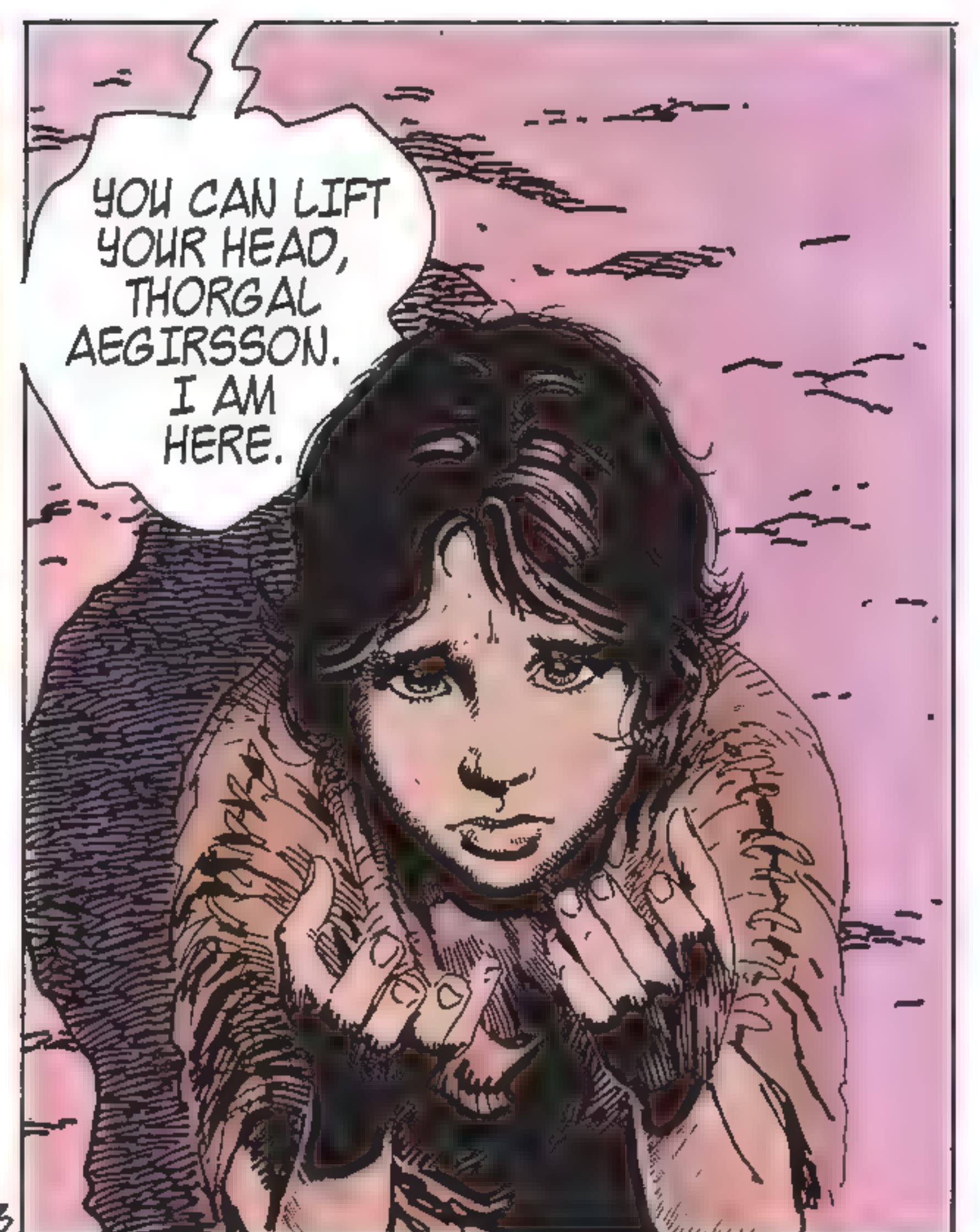
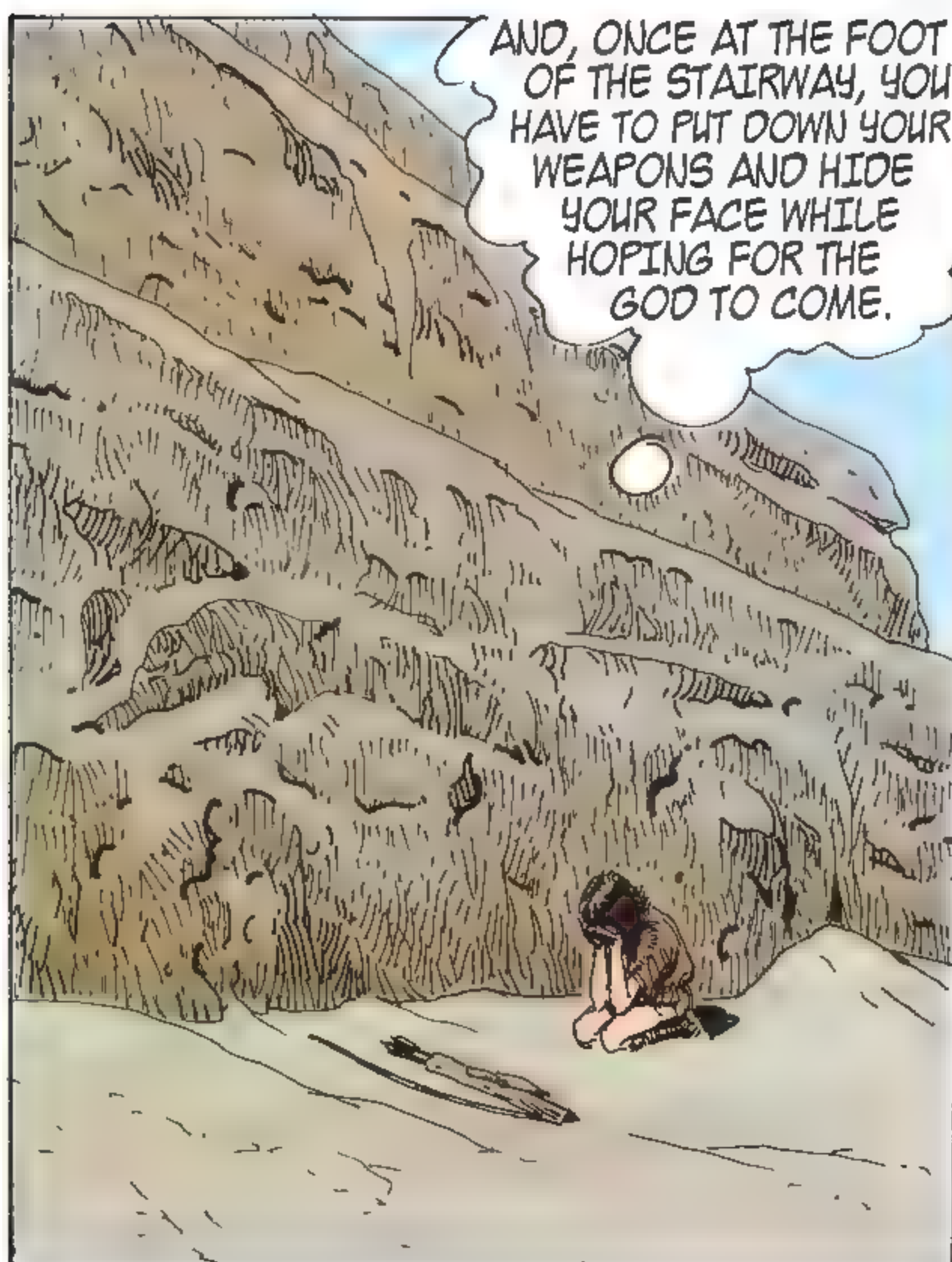
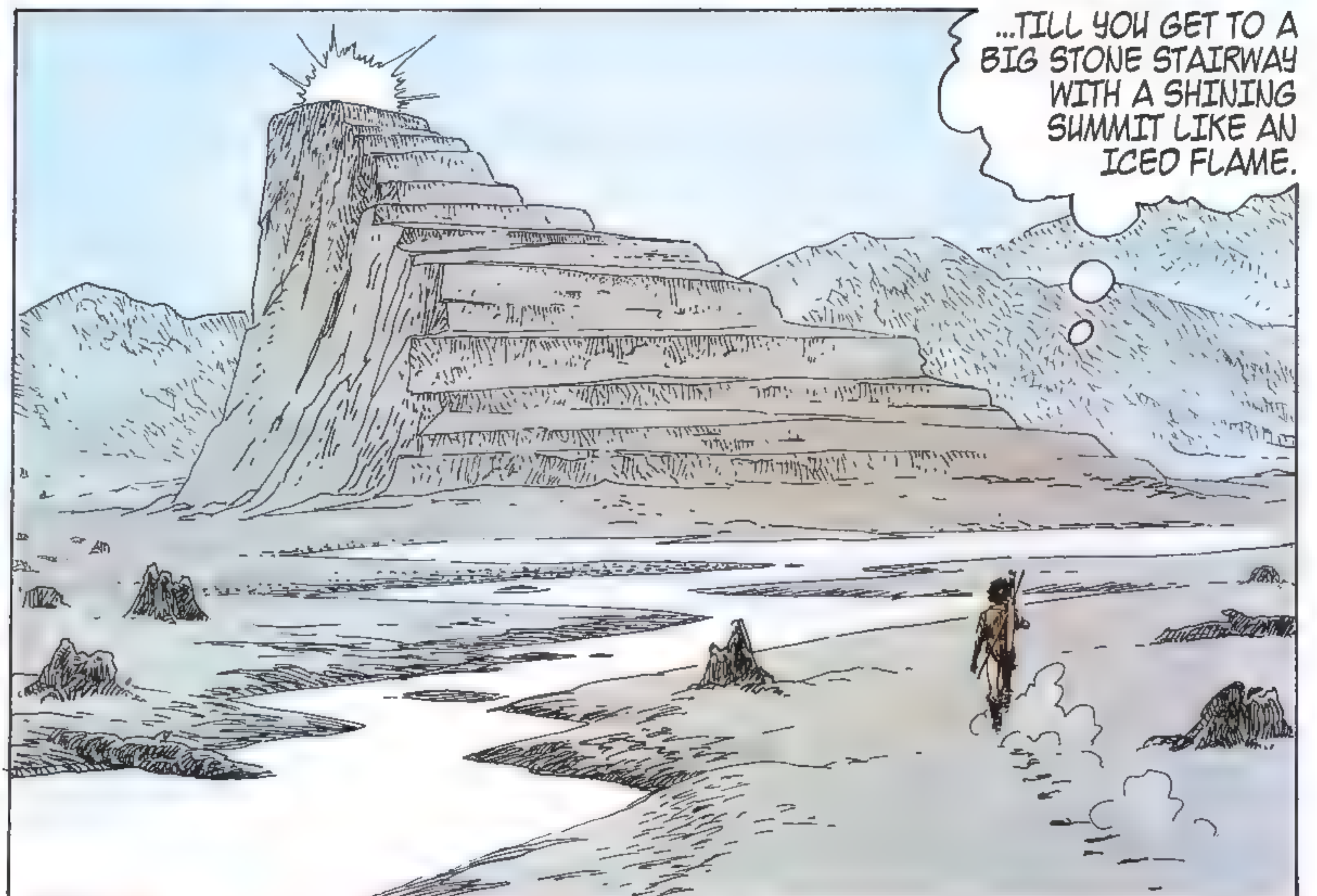
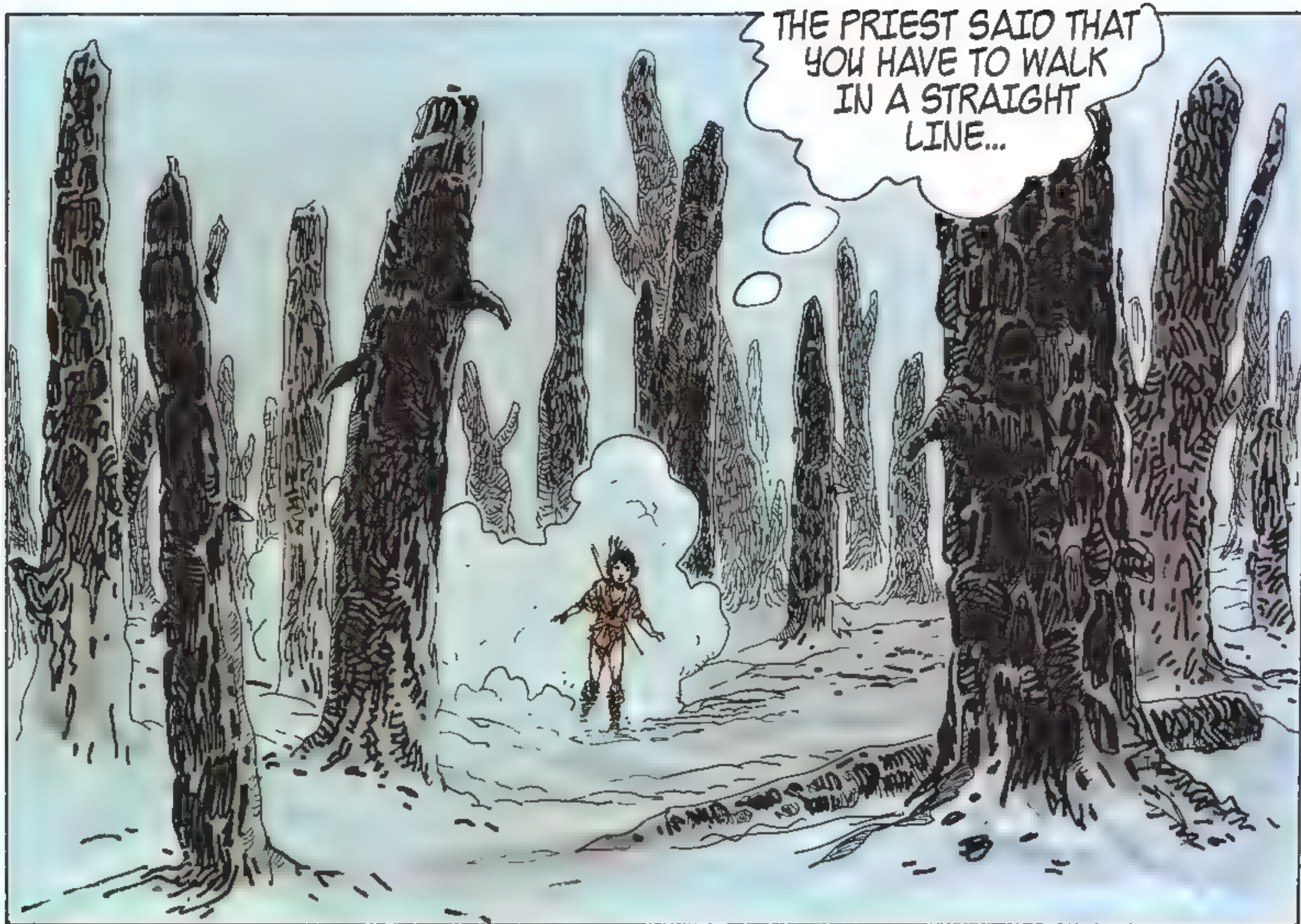


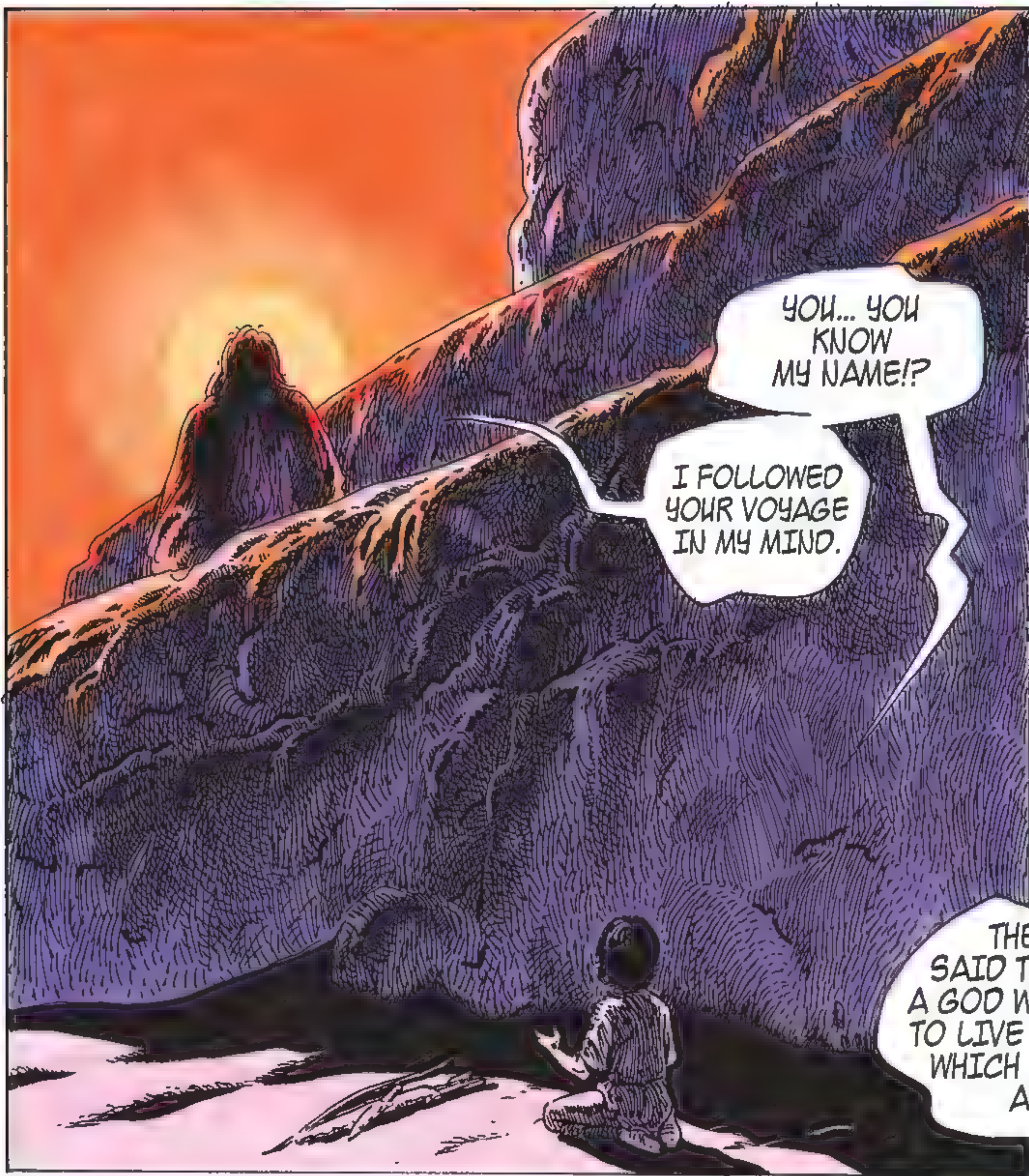
END

THE TALISMAN









YOU... YOU
KNOW
MY NAME!?

I FOLLOWED
YOUR VOYAGE
IN MY MIND.

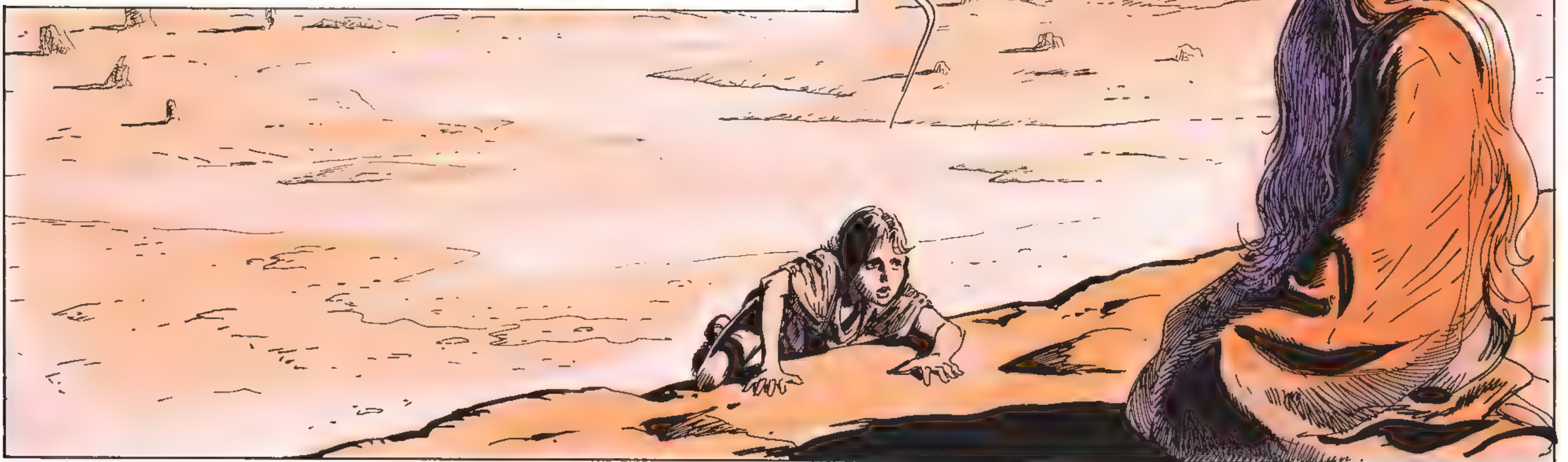
THE PRIESTS
SAID THAT YOU WERE
A GOD WHO CAME BACK
TO LIVE AMONGST MEN.
WHICH OF OUR GODS
ARE YOU?

YOU ARE SO YOUNG,
NEARLY A CHILD...
YOU HAVE A LOT OF
COURAGE TO DARE
TO COME THIS FAR.

COME AND
JOIN ME.



WHICHEVER YOU PREFER,
THORGAL. IT'S MEN WHO
GIVE THEIR NAMES TO
THE GODS.

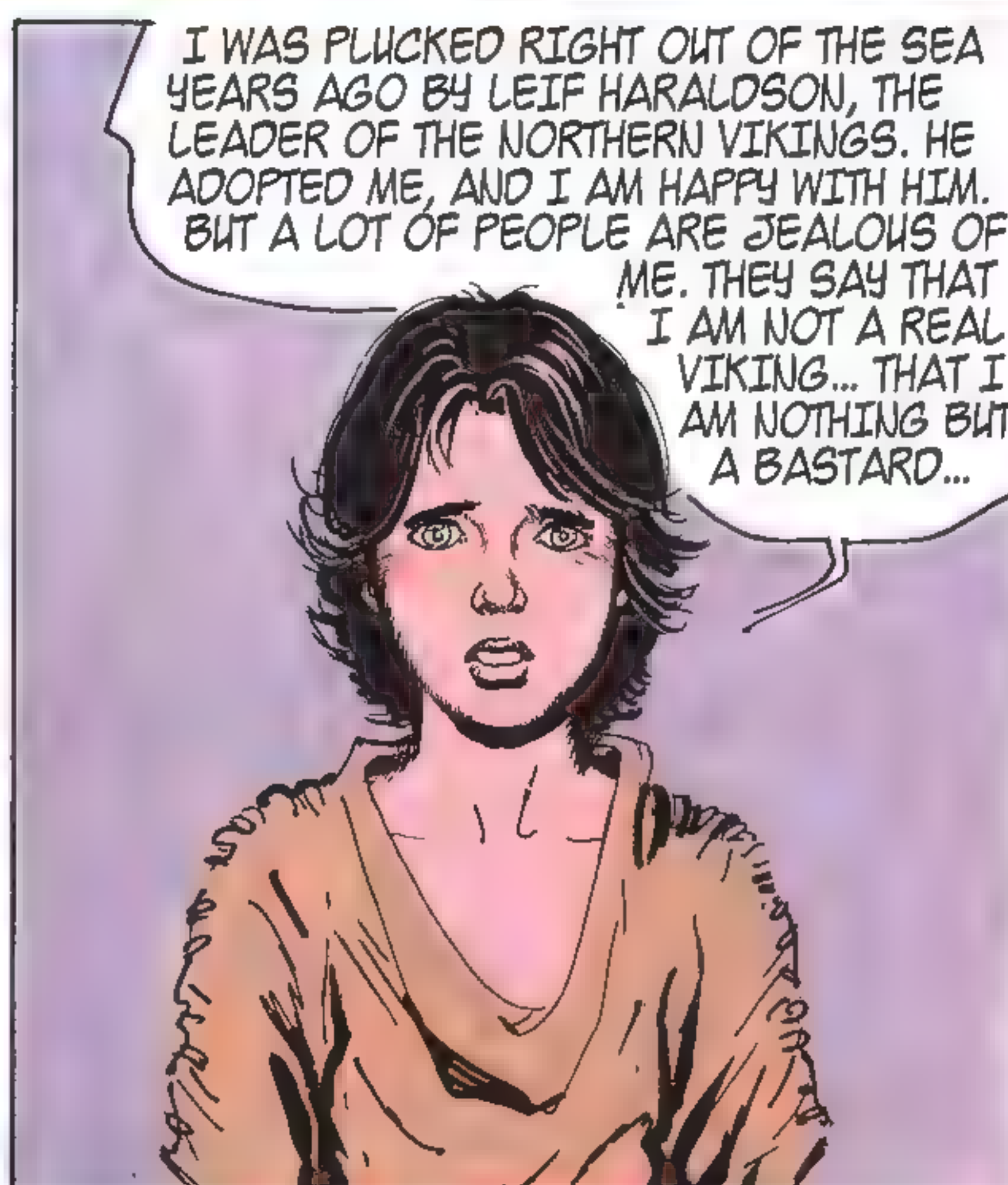


THEY ALSO SAY THAT YOU CAN SEE
THINGS BEYOND WHAT EYES CAN SEE
AND THAT YOU KNOW HOW TO READ
MEMORIES BEFORE THEY FORM...

ISN'T THAT WHY
YOU CAME?
WHAT DO
YOU WANT
TO LEARN?

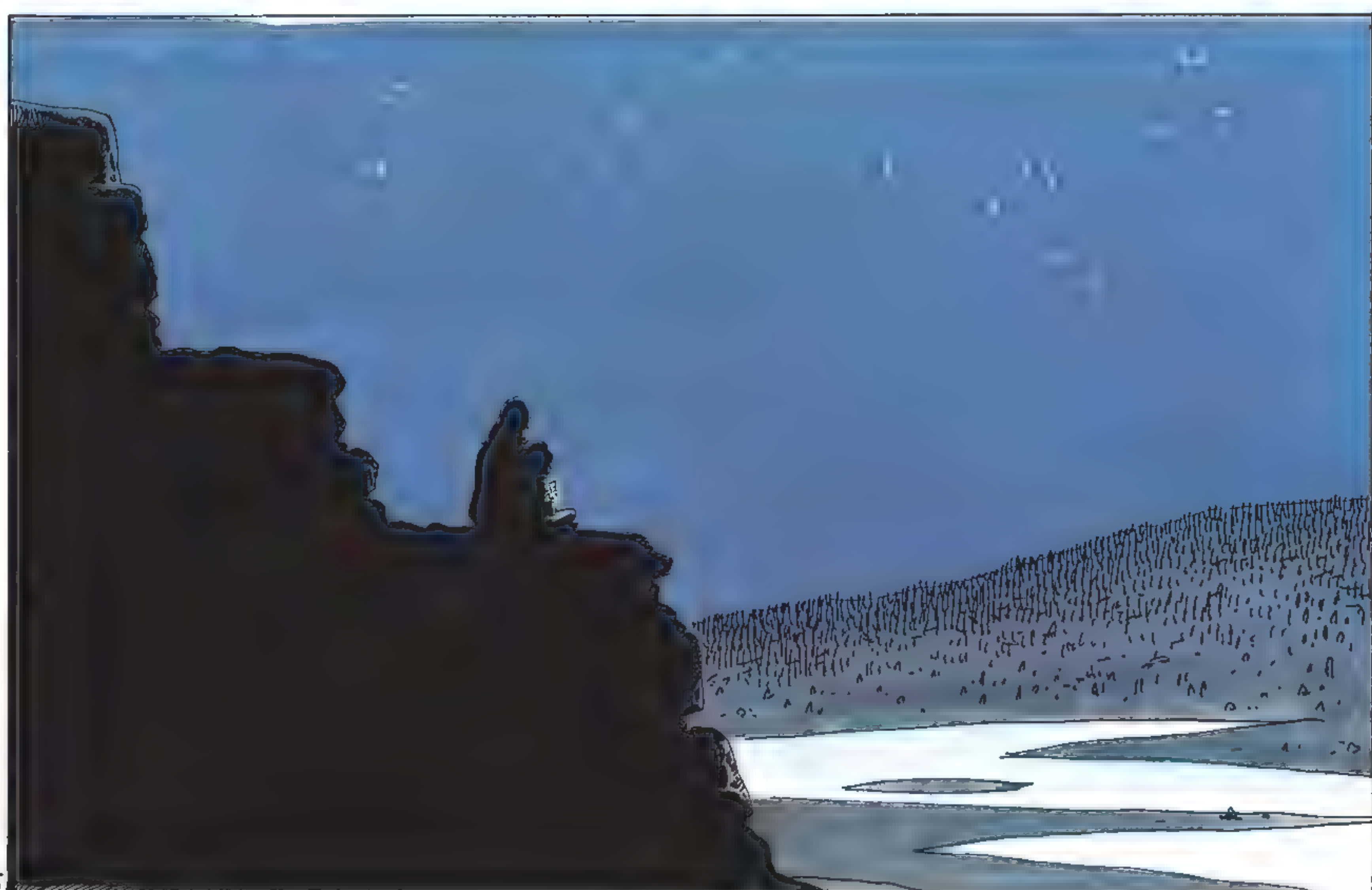
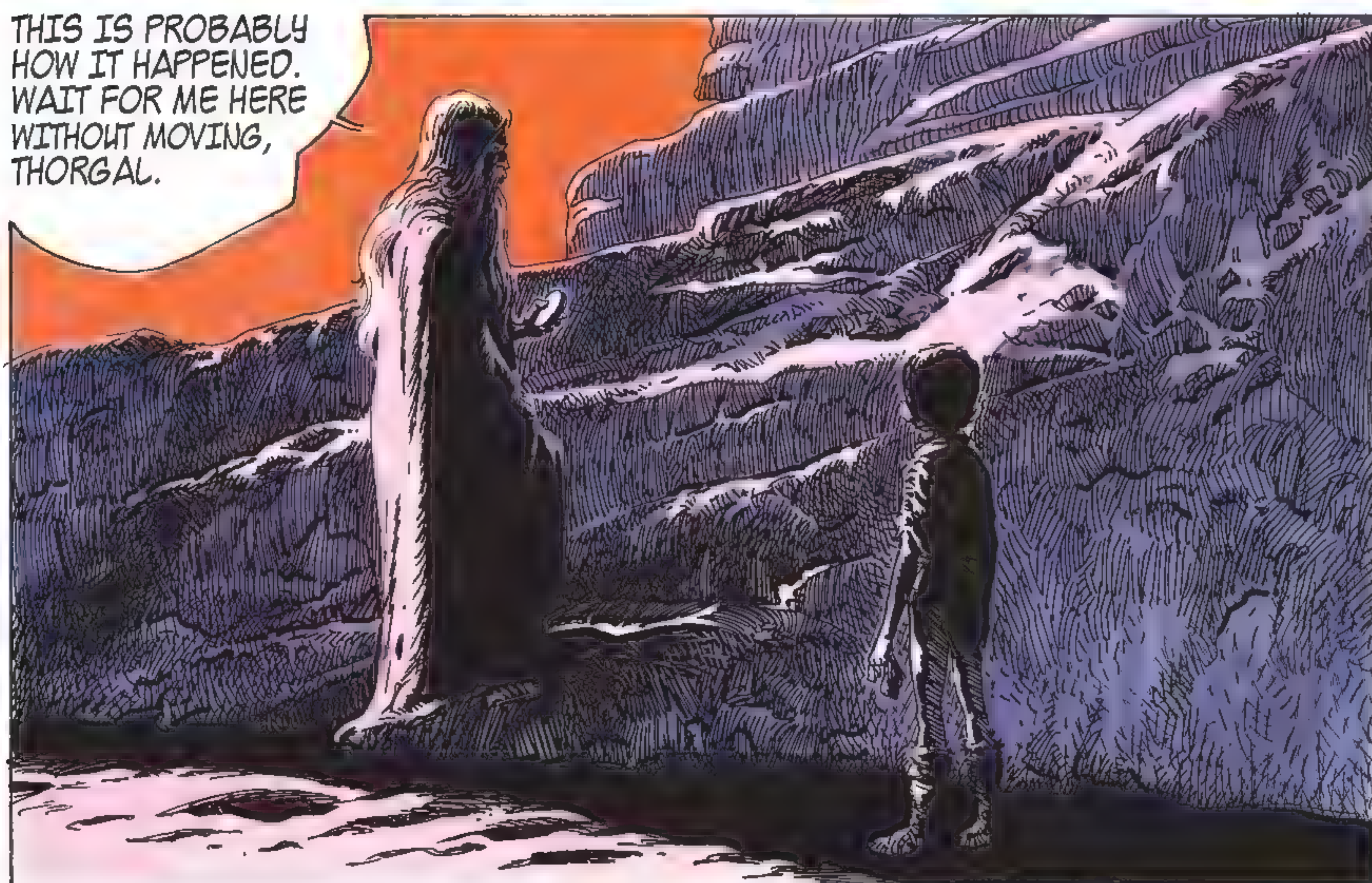


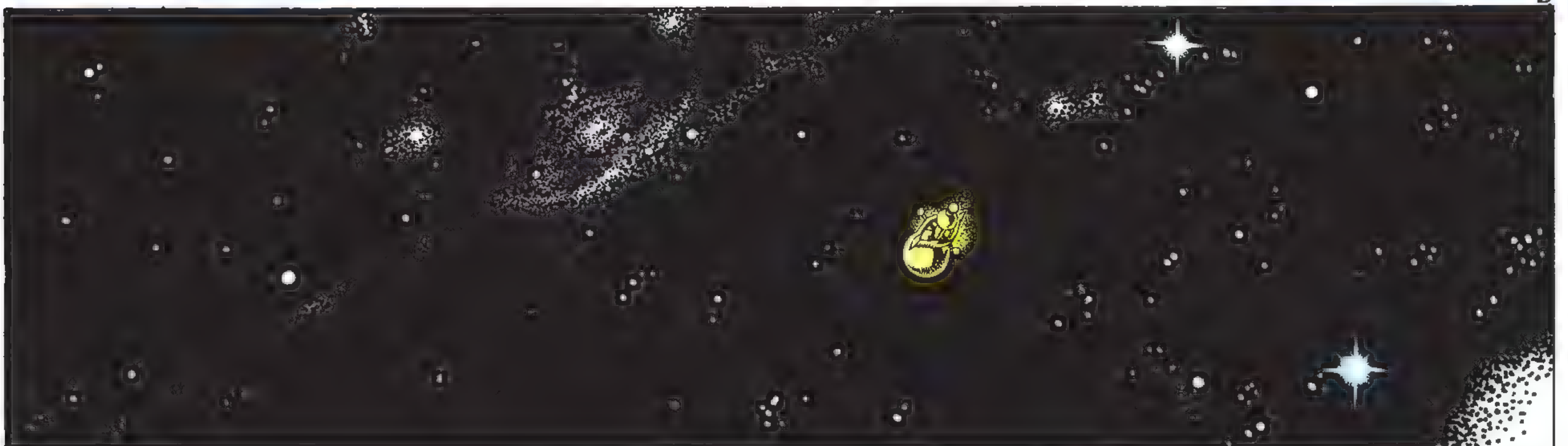
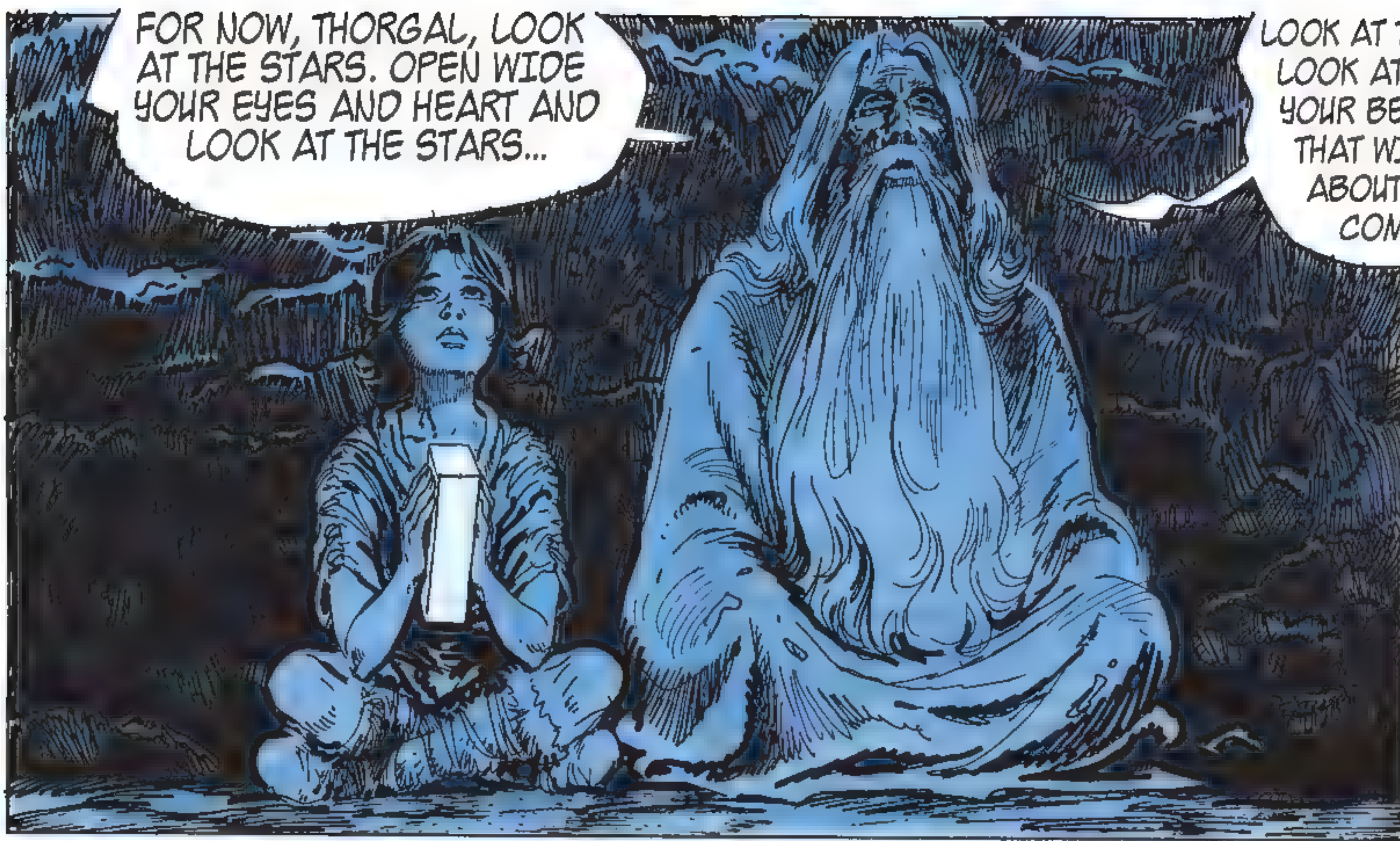
I WAS PLUCKED RIGHT OUT OF THE SEA
YEARS AGO BY LEIF HARALDSON, THE
LEADER OF THE NORTHERN VIKINGS. HE
ADOPTED ME, AND I AM HAPPY WITH HIM.
BUT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE JEALOUS OF
ME. THEY SAY THAT
I AM NOT A REAL
VIKING... THAT I
AM NOTHING BUT
A BASTARD...

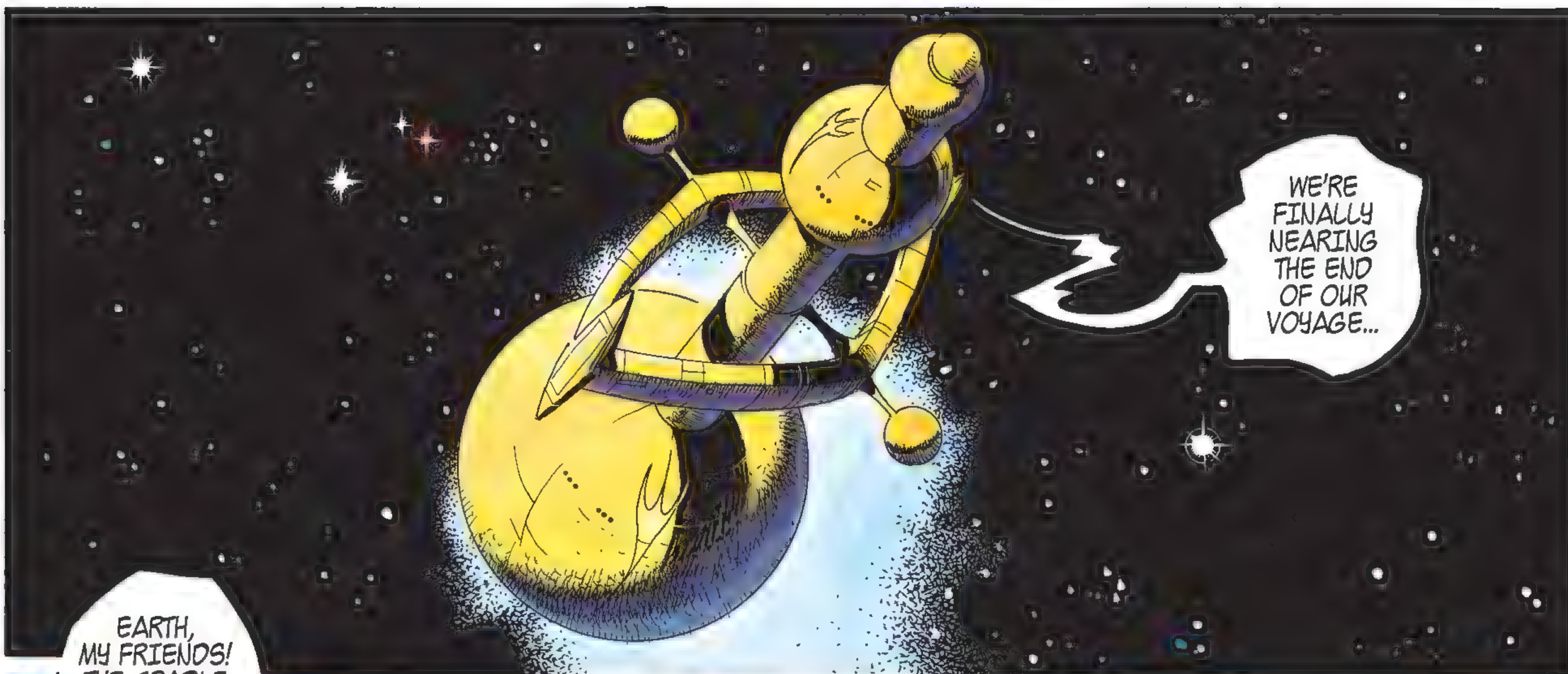


BUT, I CAME HERE BECAUSE
I... I WANTED TO KNOW WHO MY
TRUE FATHER WAS!





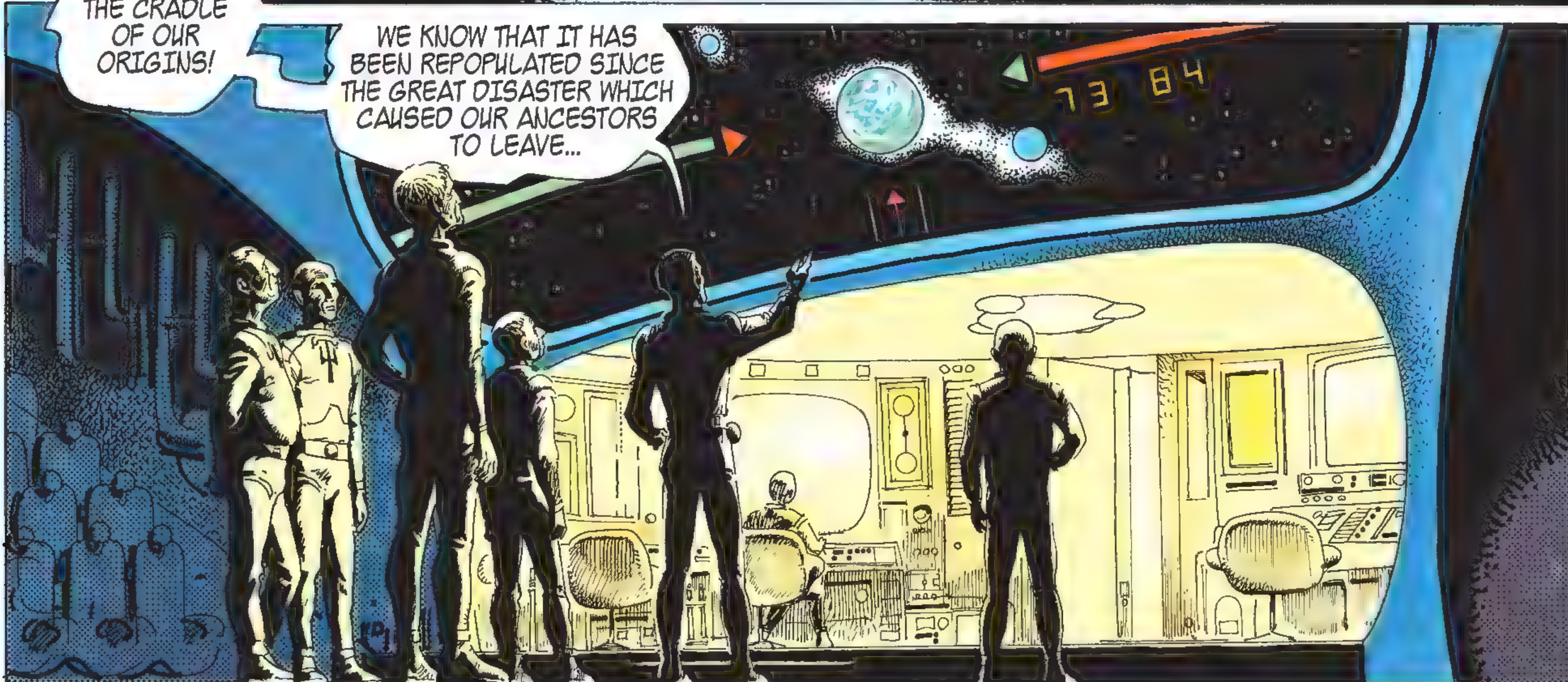




WE'RE
FINALLY
NEARING
THE END
OF OUR
VOYAGE...

EARTH,
MY FRIENDS!
THE CRADLE
OF OUR
ORIGINS!

WE KNOW THAT IT HAS
BEEN REPOPULATED SINCE
THE GREAT DISASTER WHICH
CAUSED OUR ANCESTORS
TO LEAVE...



WE ALSO KNOW IT ABOUNDS WITH
ENERGY SOURCES THAT OUR ADOPTIVE
PLANET NEEDS SO BADLY. OUR
MISSION IS TO FIND A WAY TO USE
THESE SOURCES. BUT REMEMBER
THE FORMAL ORDERS: TO AVOID
AT ALL COSTS ANY CONFLICT
WITH THE NEW INHABITANTS.



THE ORDERS
HAVE CHANGED,
XARGOS!

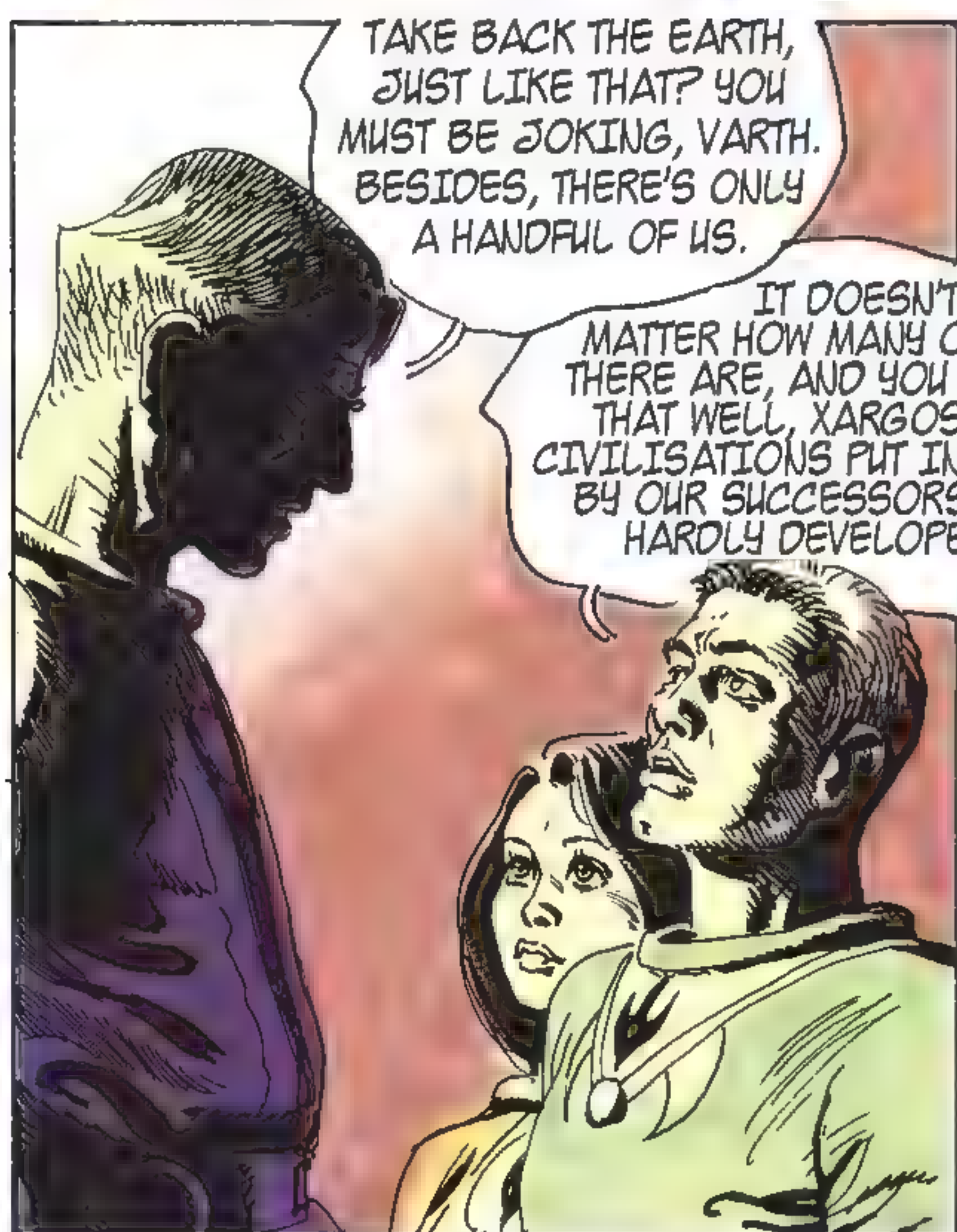


VARTH! WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS INTRUSION?

THE MEANING IS THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE CREW AGREES WITH ME.



THE EARTH WAS OUR PLANET BEFORE IT BELONGED TO THE PRIMITIVE TRIBES WHO REPOPULATED IT. OUR JOB IS TO TAKE IT BACK FROM THEM.



TAKE BACK THE EARTH, JUST LIKE THAT? YOU MUST BE JOKING, VARTH. BESIDES, THERE'S ONLY A HANDFUL OF US.

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY OF US THERE ARE, AND YOU KNOW THAT WELL, XARGOS. THE CIVILISATIONS PUT IN PLACE BY OUR SUCCESSORS ARE HARDLY DEVELOPED.



WE HAVE THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES ON THEM. WITHOUT EVEN MENTIONING THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR EXTRASENSORY FACULTIES. WE WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE TO FIGHT TO WIN; ALL WE'D HAVE TO DO IS PRETEND TO BE GODS.



PRETEND TO BE GODS!? YOU ARE MAD, VARTH!

ON THE CONTRARY, REALISTIC. OUR ANALYSIS HAS TAUGHT US THAT ALL THE EARTHLINGS, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, LOVE THE IDOLS THEY SUBMIT TO. WE WILL BE, QUITE SIMPLY, SUPERIOR IDOLS TO THE OTHER ONES.



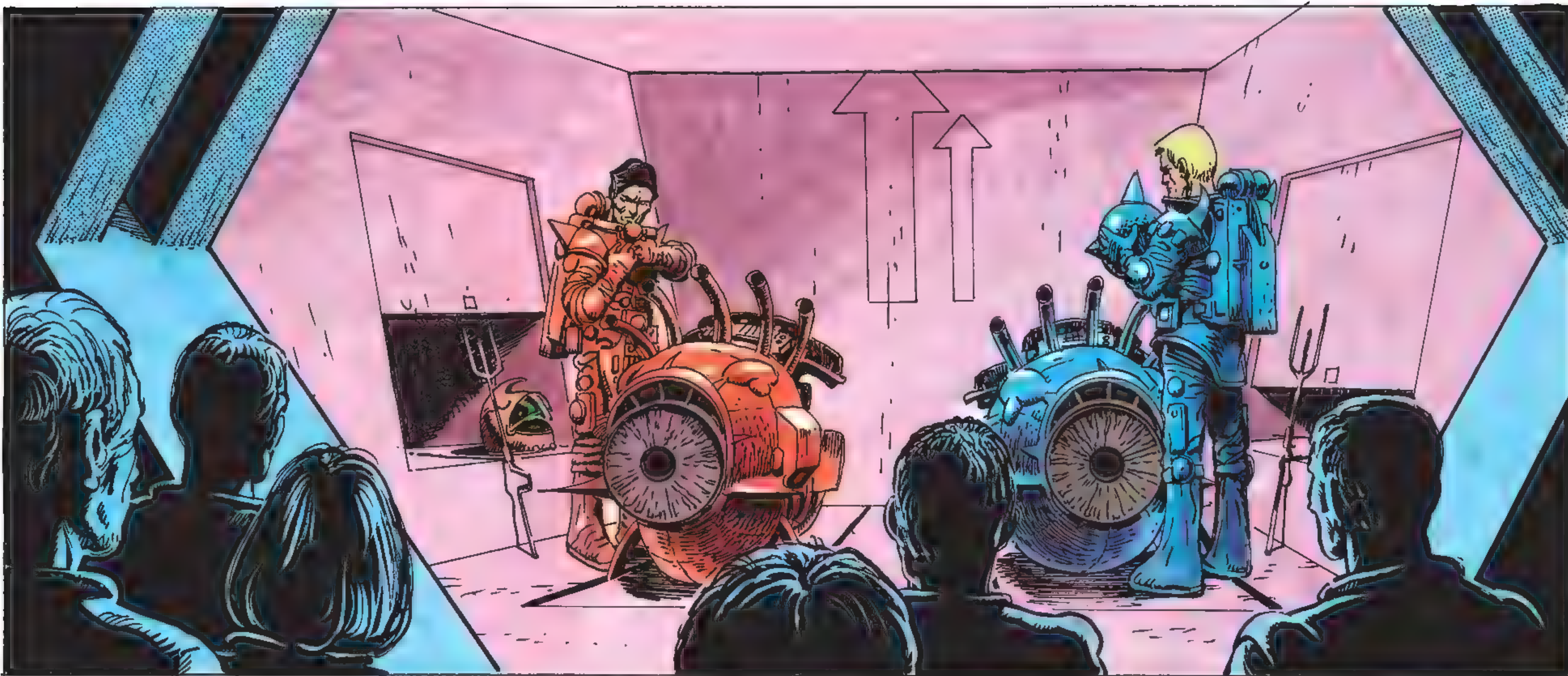
QUITE SIMPLY... AND YOU, HAYNEE, ARE YOU PART OF THIS FOOLISH PLAN?

I THINK THAT VARTH IS RIGHT, FATHER. IT WOULD BE THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY OF GETTING WHAT WE NEED.

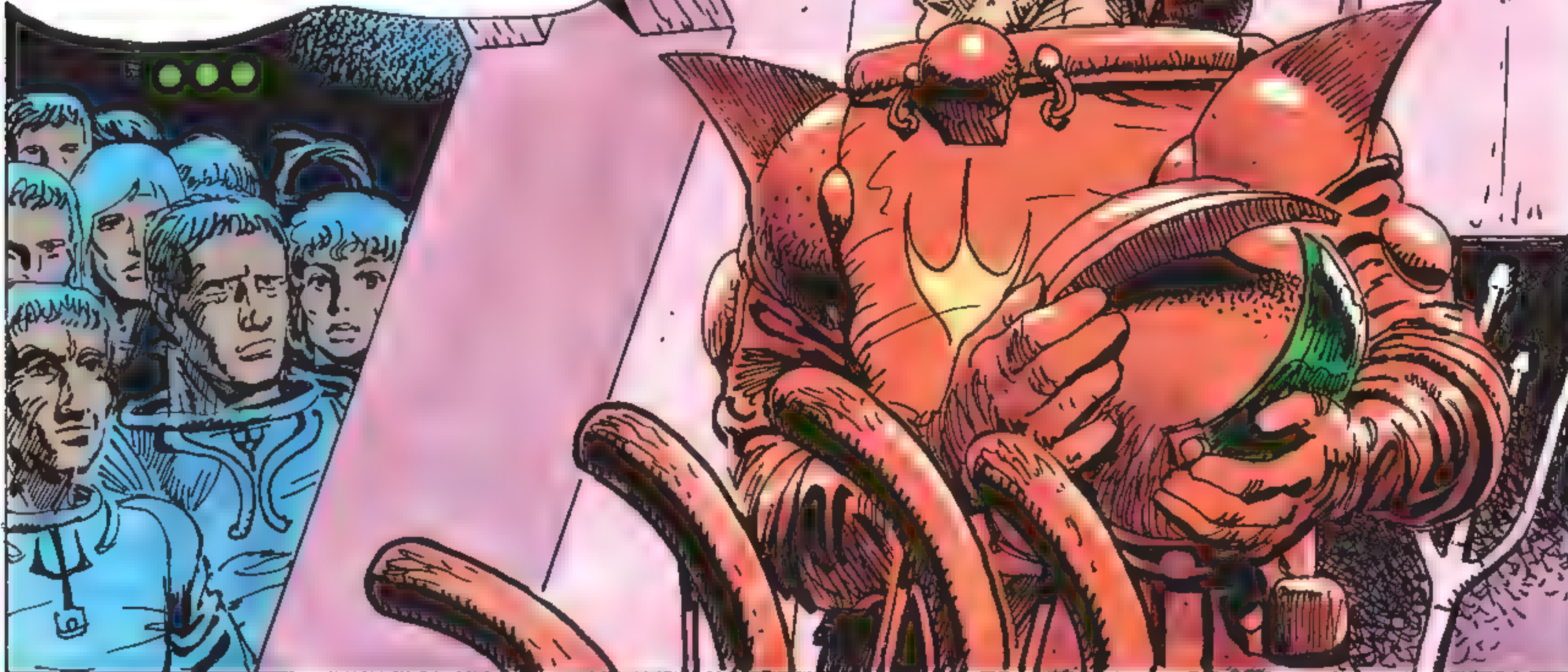


LOVE BLINDS YOU, MY DAUGHTER. AS FOR YOU, VARTH, MY ANSWER IS NO. WHAT YOU FORESEE WOULD BECOME SLAVERY, PURE AND SIMPLE.

I THOUGHT YOU'D SAY THAT, XARGOS. THERE'S ONLY ONE SOLUTION LEFT THEN...



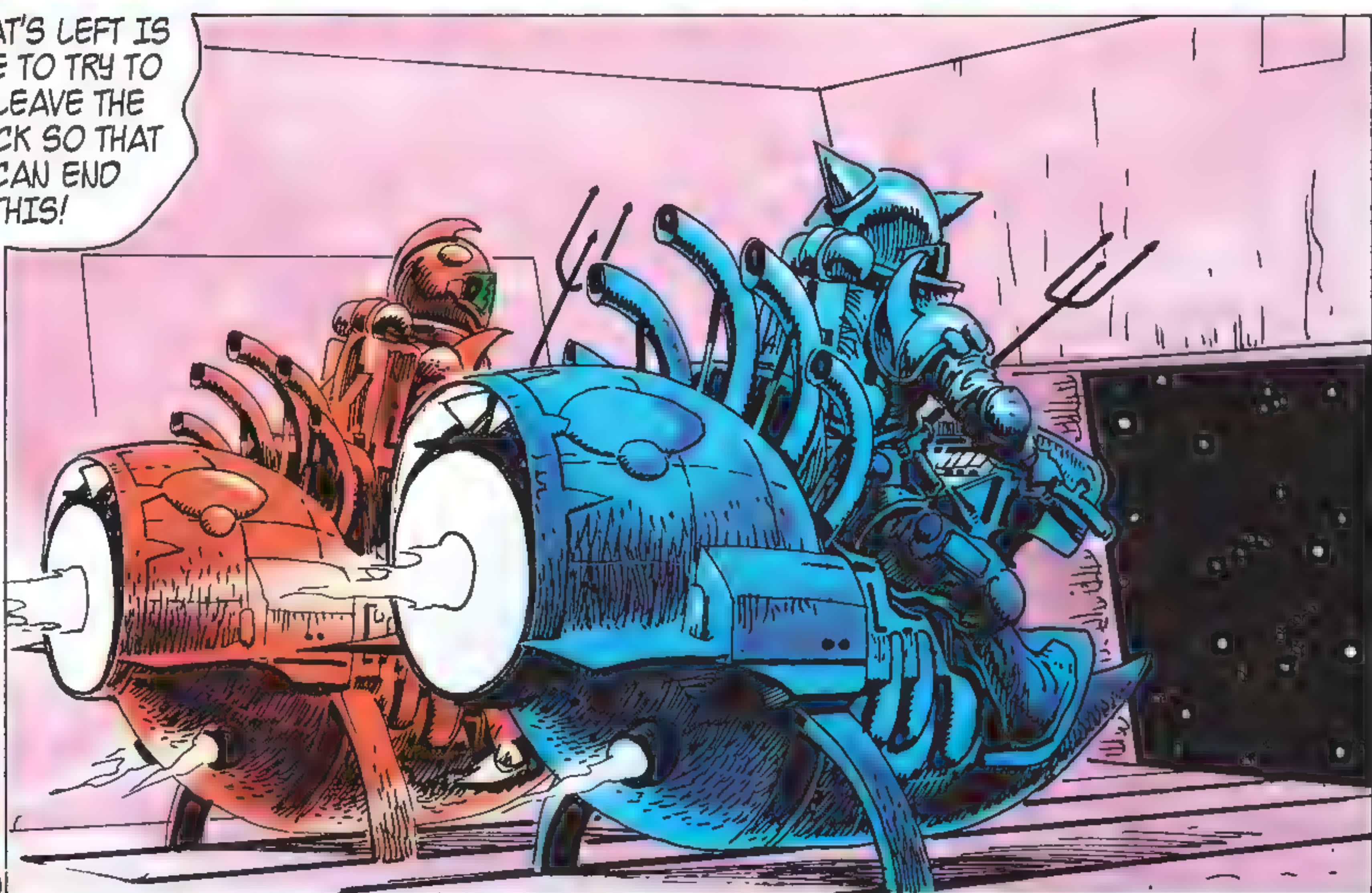
I ACCEPTED THIS DUEL, ACCORDING TO OUR CUSTOMS, TO AVOID THE BLOODSHED THAT AN OPEN FIGHT ONBOARD OUR VESSEL WOULD LEAD TO. BUT IF VARTH MANAGES TO KILL ME, I BEG OF YOU TO THINK MORE ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE ACTIONS THAT HE WOULD HAVE YOU COMMIT.

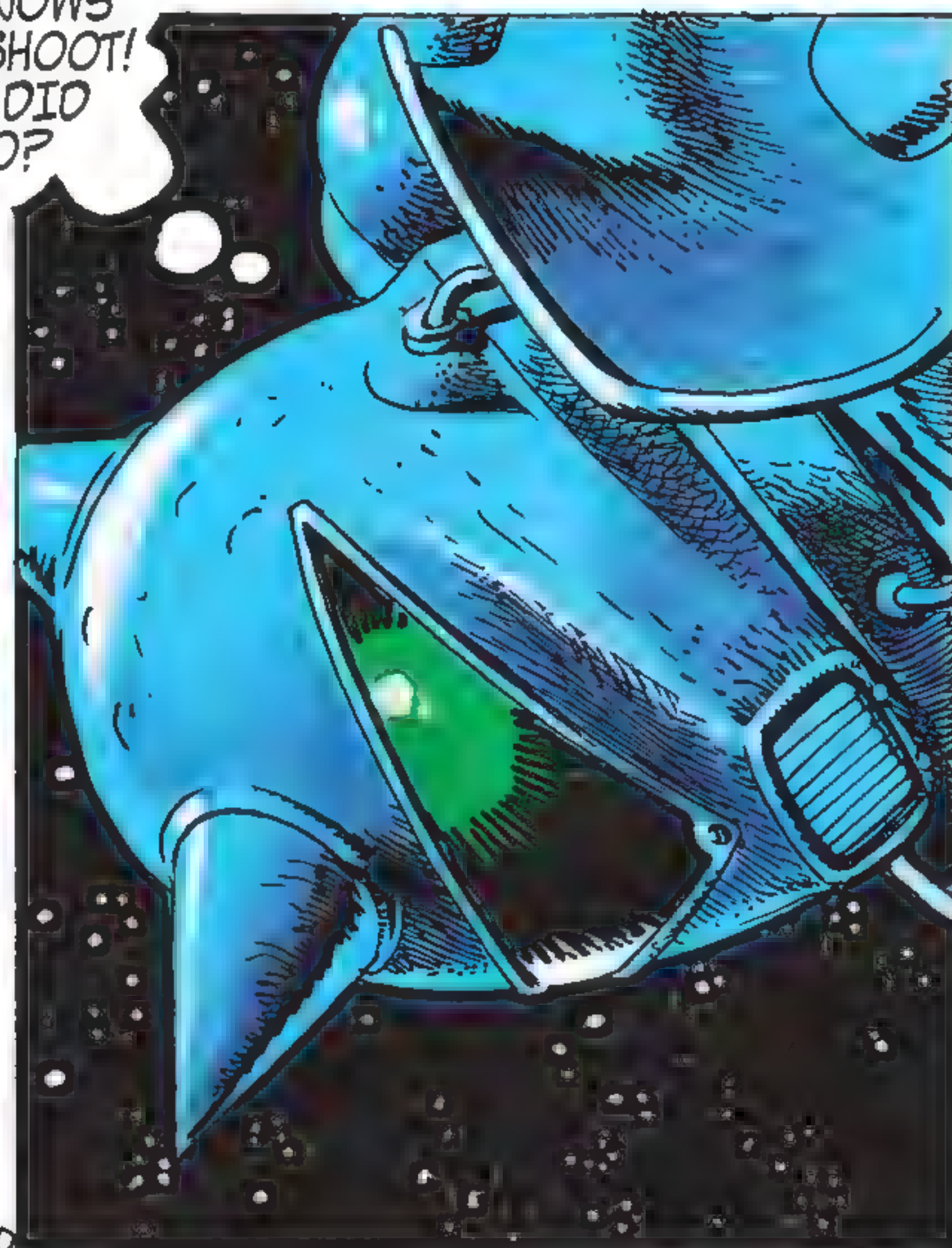
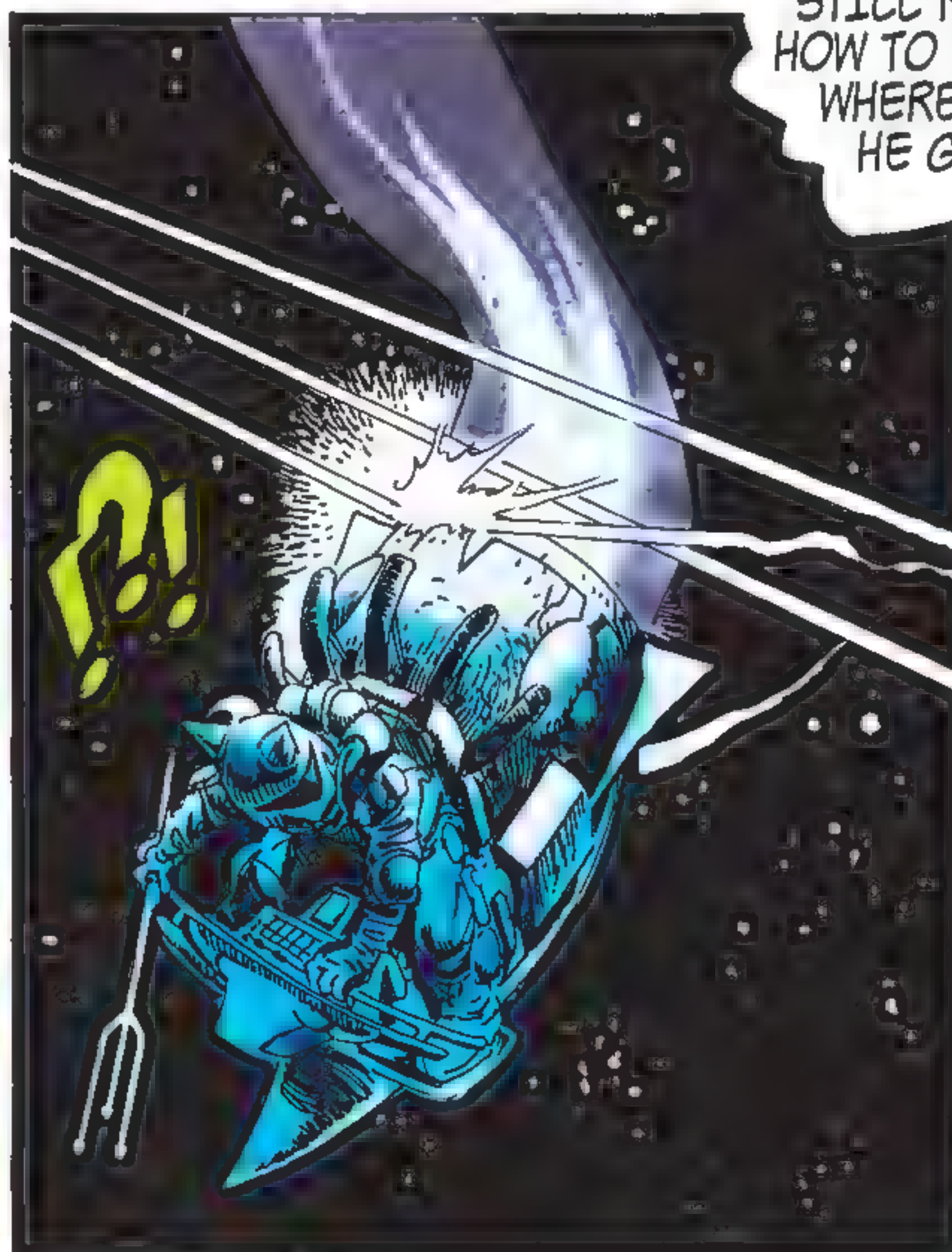
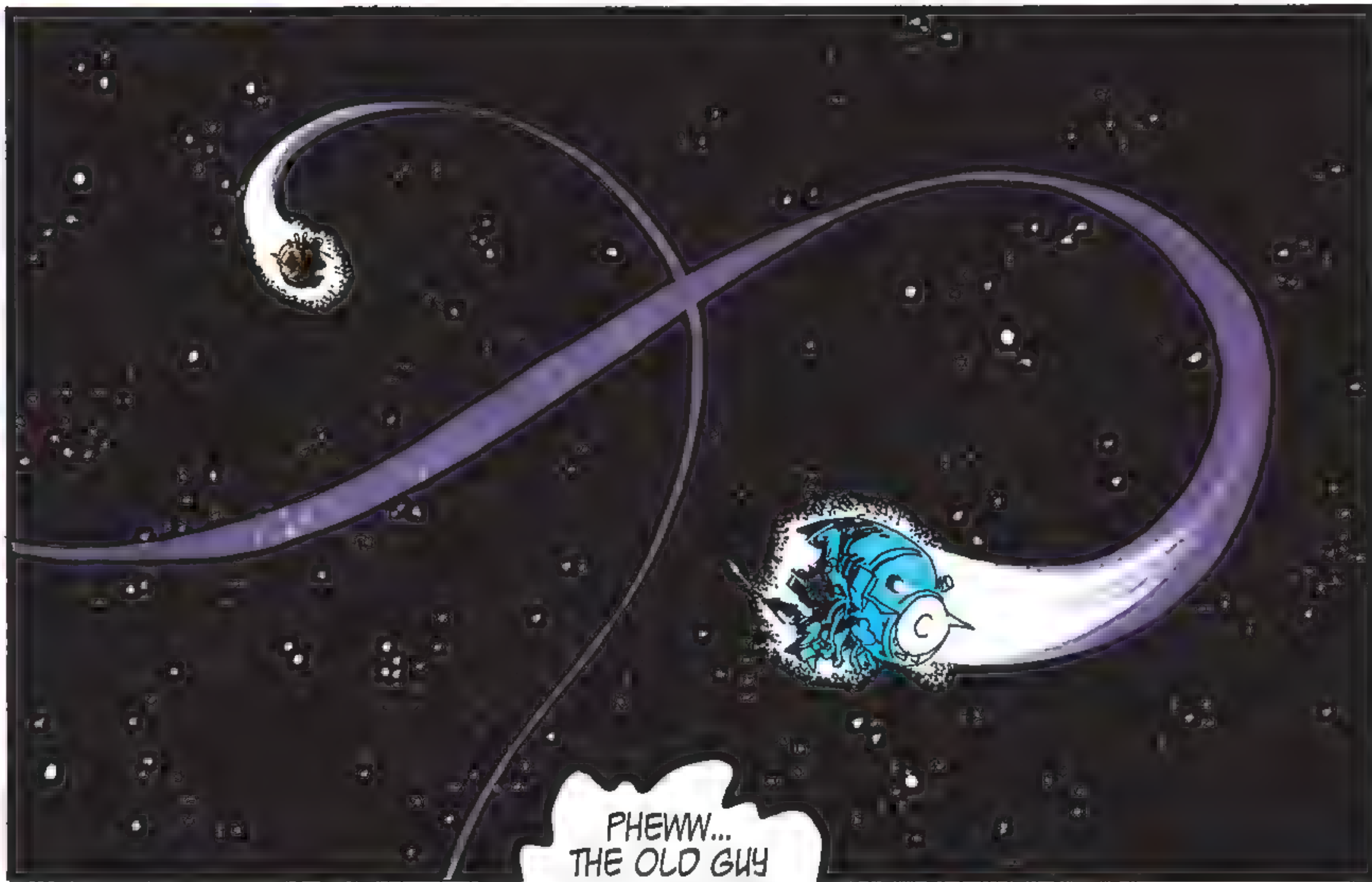
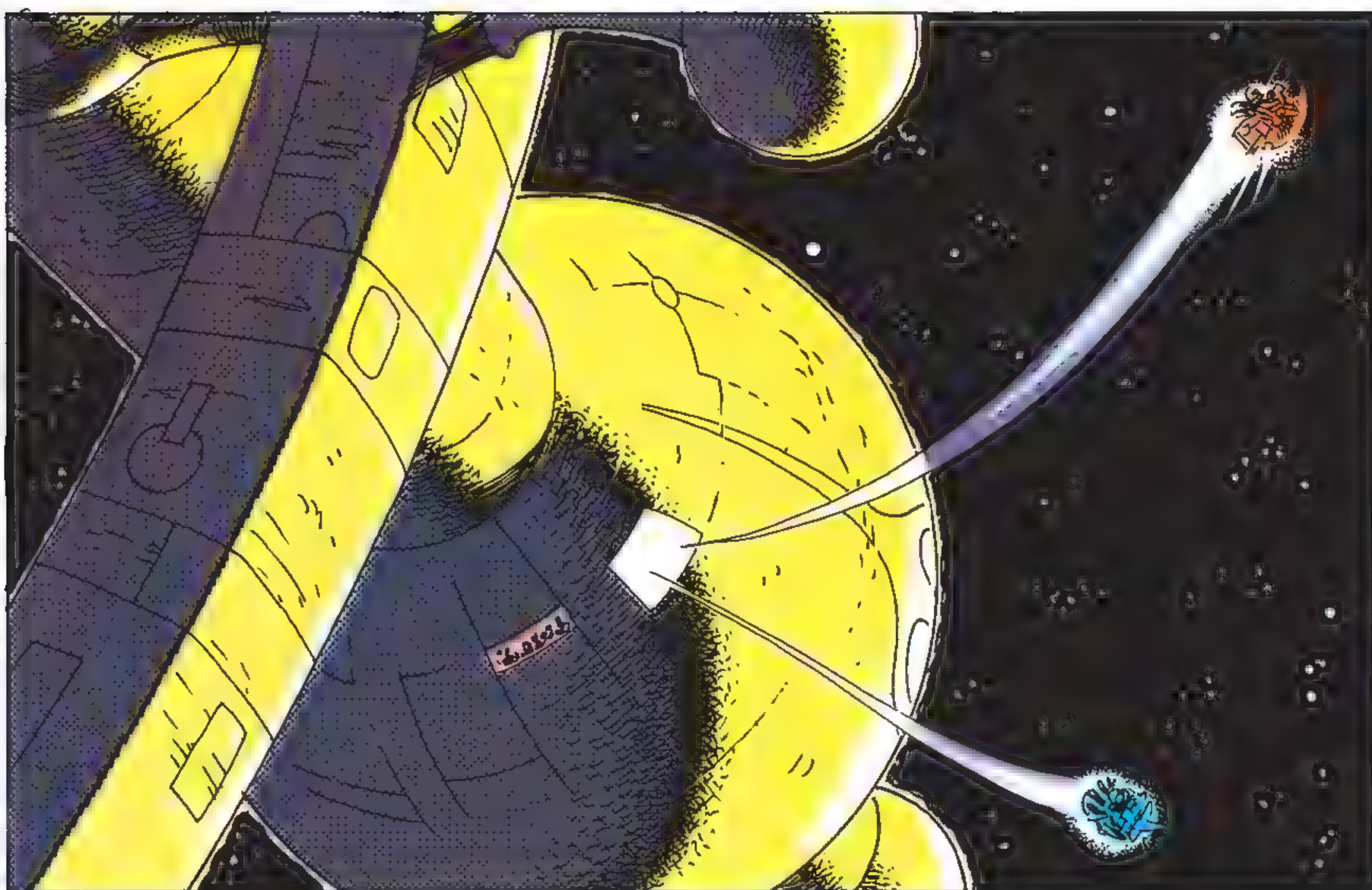


OK, I'VE UNDERSTOOD.

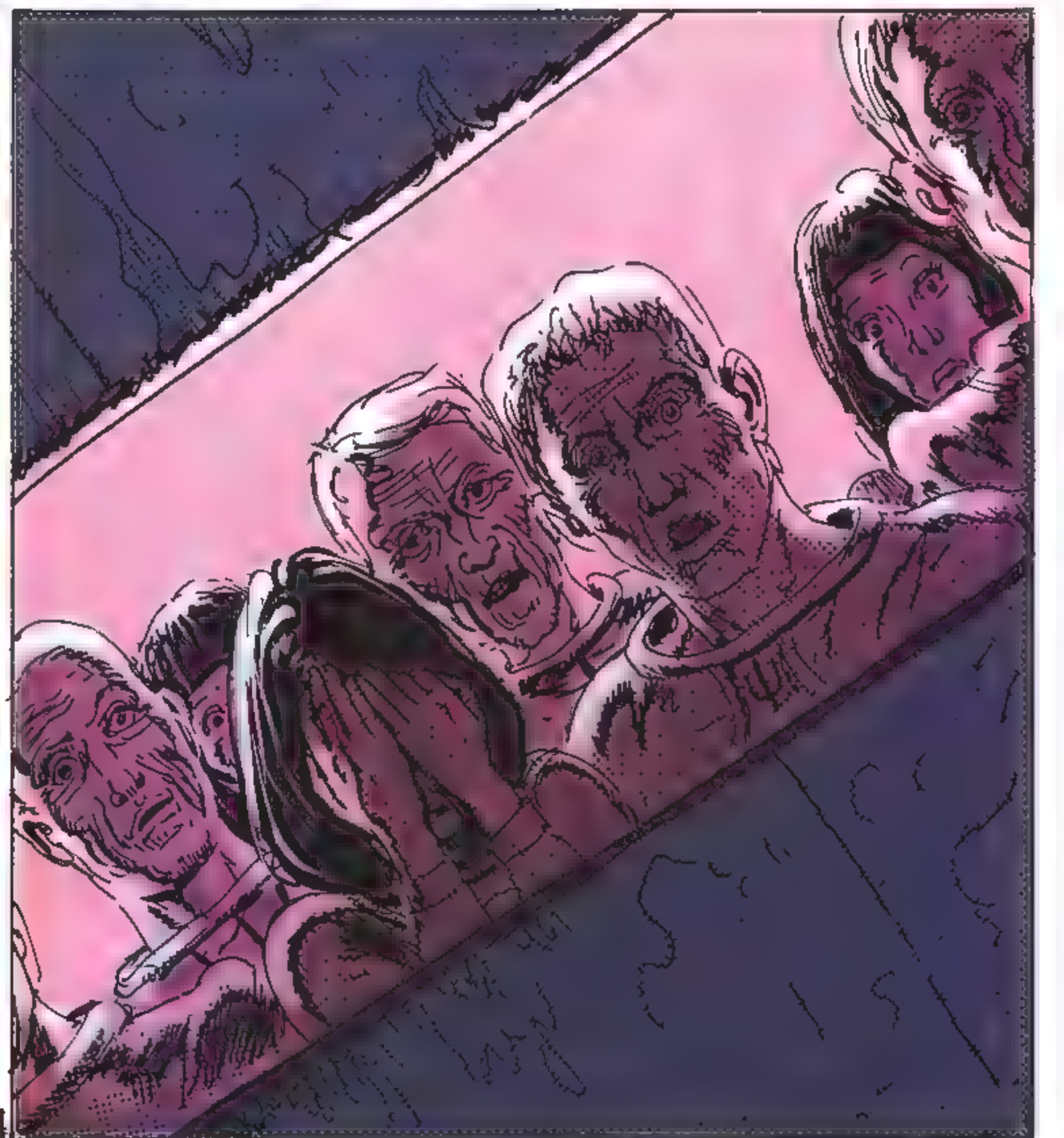
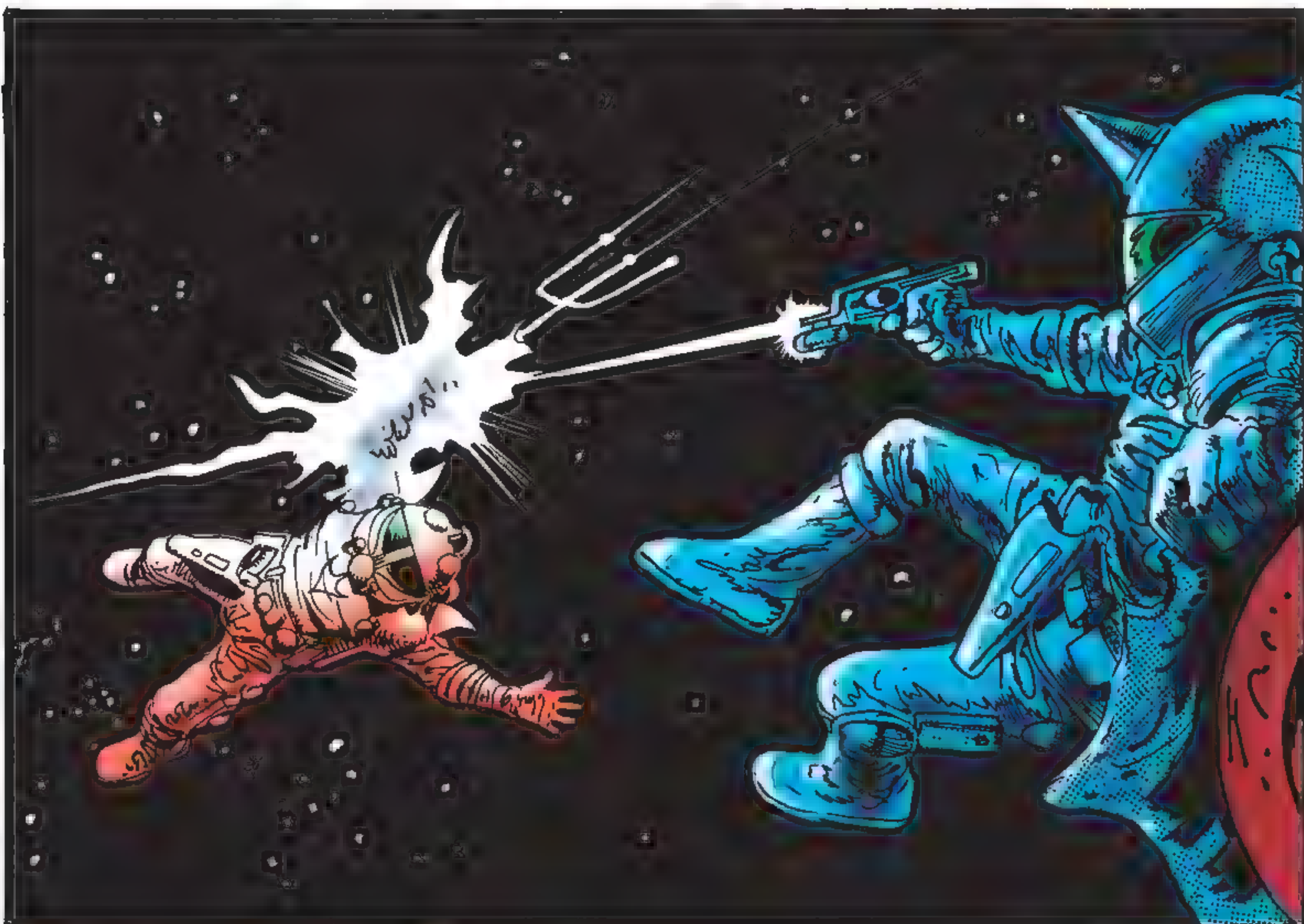


ALL THAT'S LEFT IS FOR ME TO TRY TO WIN. LEAVE THE AIRLOCK SO THAT WE CAN END THIS!





PHEWW...
THE OLD GUY
STILL KNOWS
HOW TO SHOOT!
WHERE DID
HE GO?



I SHOULD HAVE LEFT YOU TO PERISH IN SPACE, XARGOS, AS THE RULES STATE. BUT I COULDN'T FORGET THAT YOU ARE THE FATHER OF THE WOMAN I LOVE. ALSO, I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO KEEP YOUR LIFE.



WE WILL SOON PENETRATE THE EARTH'S ORBIT. YOU WILL LEAVE THE VESSEL ONBOARD ONE OF OUR SHUTTLES AND PERHAPS SUCCEED IN REACHING THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET... YOU WILL THEN BE FREE TO PRACTICE YOUR UTOPIAN IDEAS.

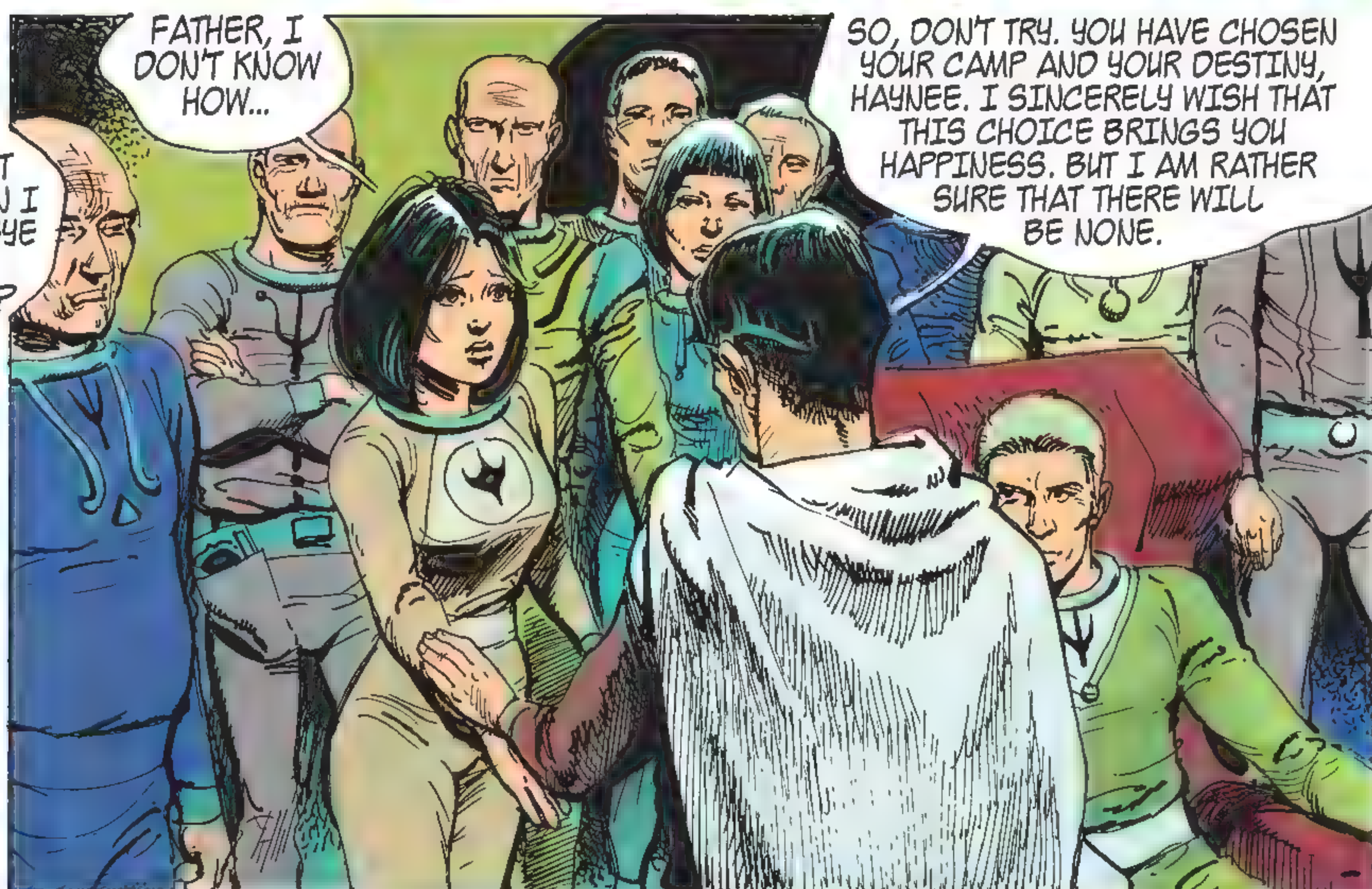


OF COURSE, THOSE AMONGST US WHO WISH TO CAN ACCOMPANY YOU IN YOUR EXILE, BUT I DOUBT THAT THERE WILL BE MANY VOLUNTEERS.



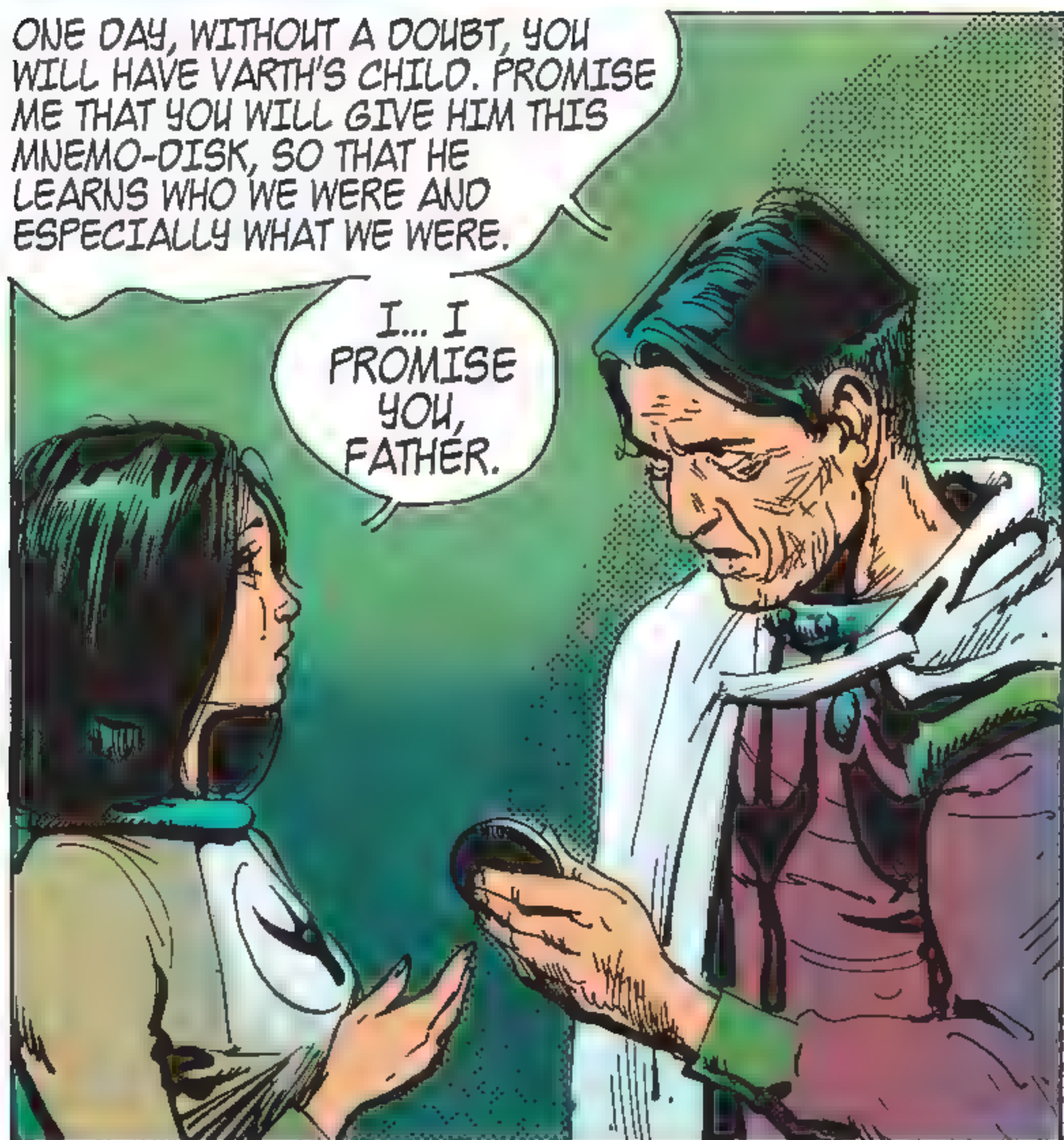
IT DOESN'T MATTER. CAN I SAY GOODBYE TO MY DAUGHTER?

FATHER, I DON'T KNOW HOW...

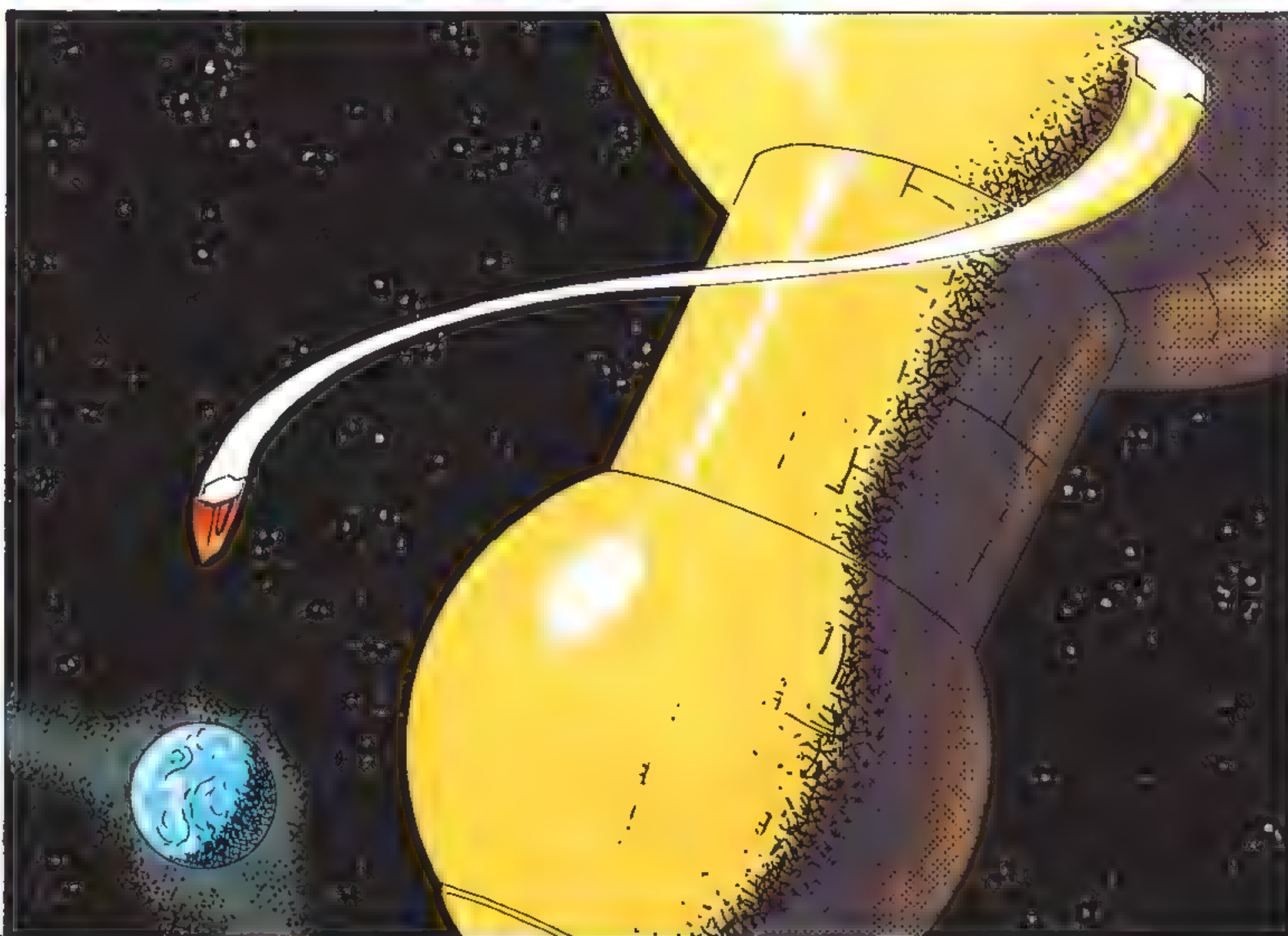


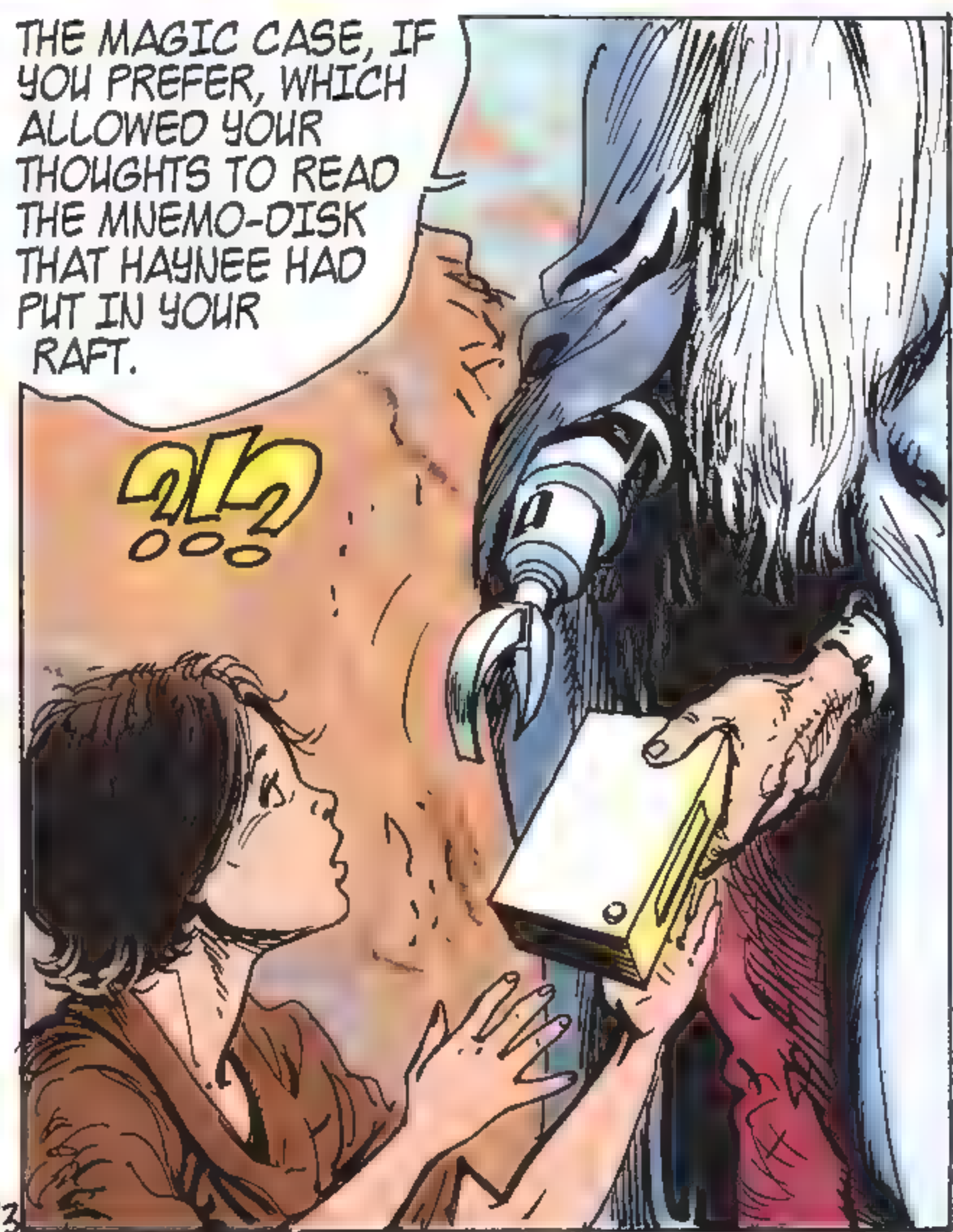
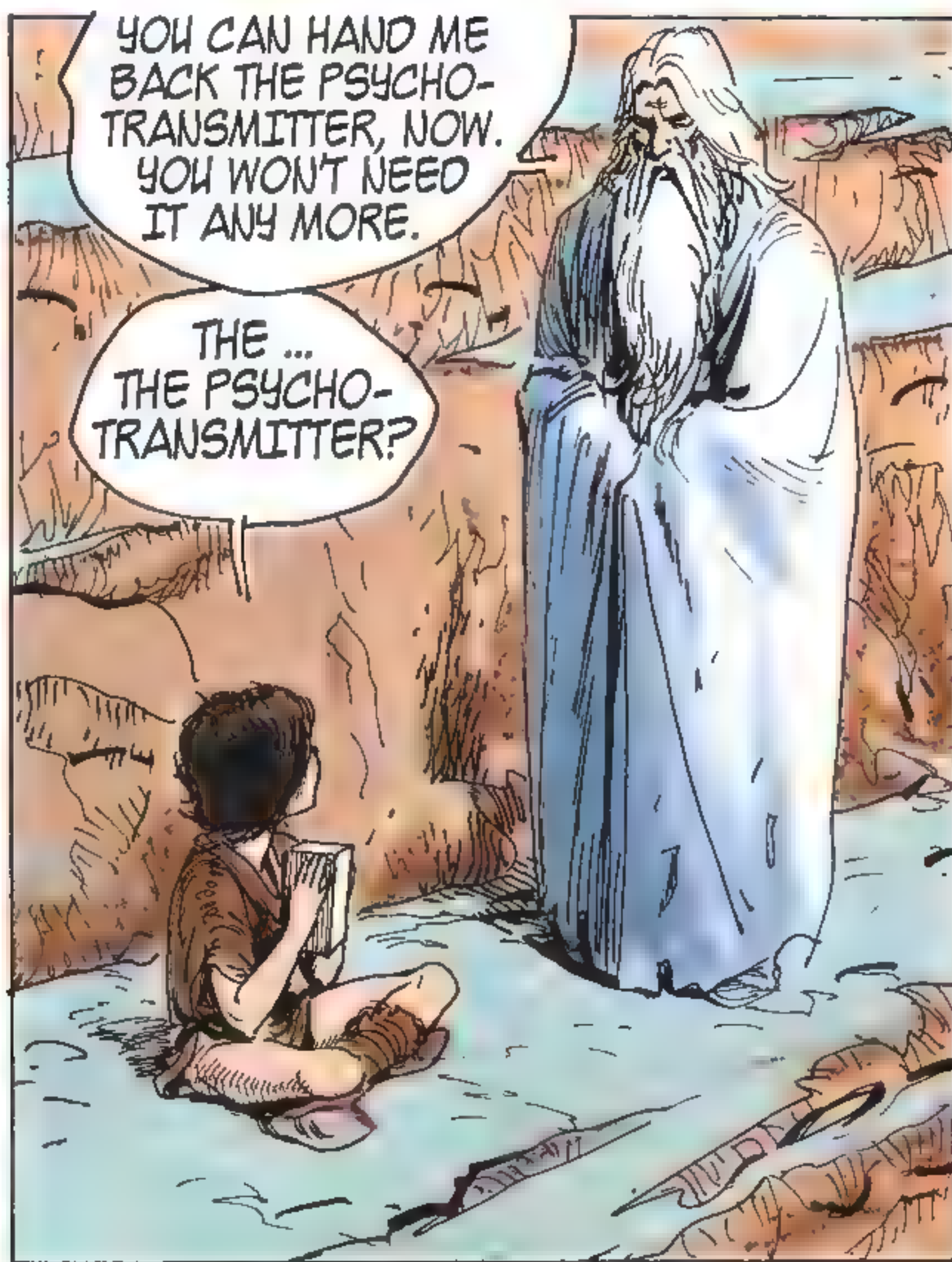
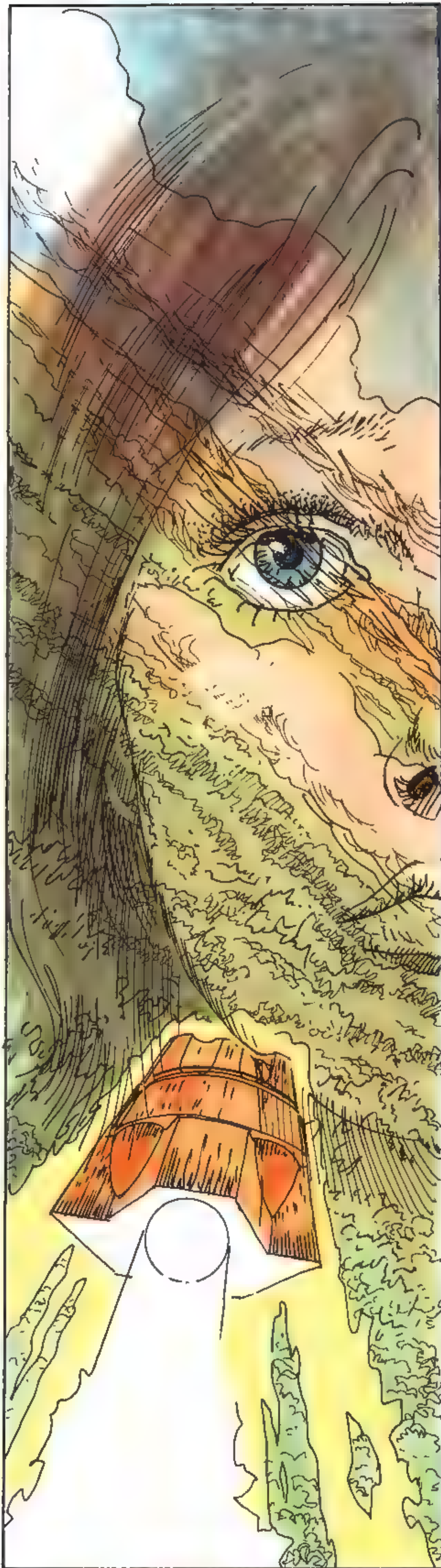
SO, DON'T TRY. YOU HAVE CHOSEN YOUR CAMP AND YOUR DESTINY, HAYNEE. I SINCERELY WISH THAT THIS CHOICE BRINGS YOU HAPPINESS. BUT I AM RATHER SURE THAT THERE WILL BE NONE.

ONE DAY, WITHOUT A DOUBT, YOU WILL HAVE VARTH'S CHILD. PROMISE ME THAT YOU WILL GIVE HIM THIS MNEMO-DISK, SO THAT HE LEARNS WHO WE WERE AND ESPECIALLY WHAT WE WERE.



I... I PROMISE YOU, FATHER.







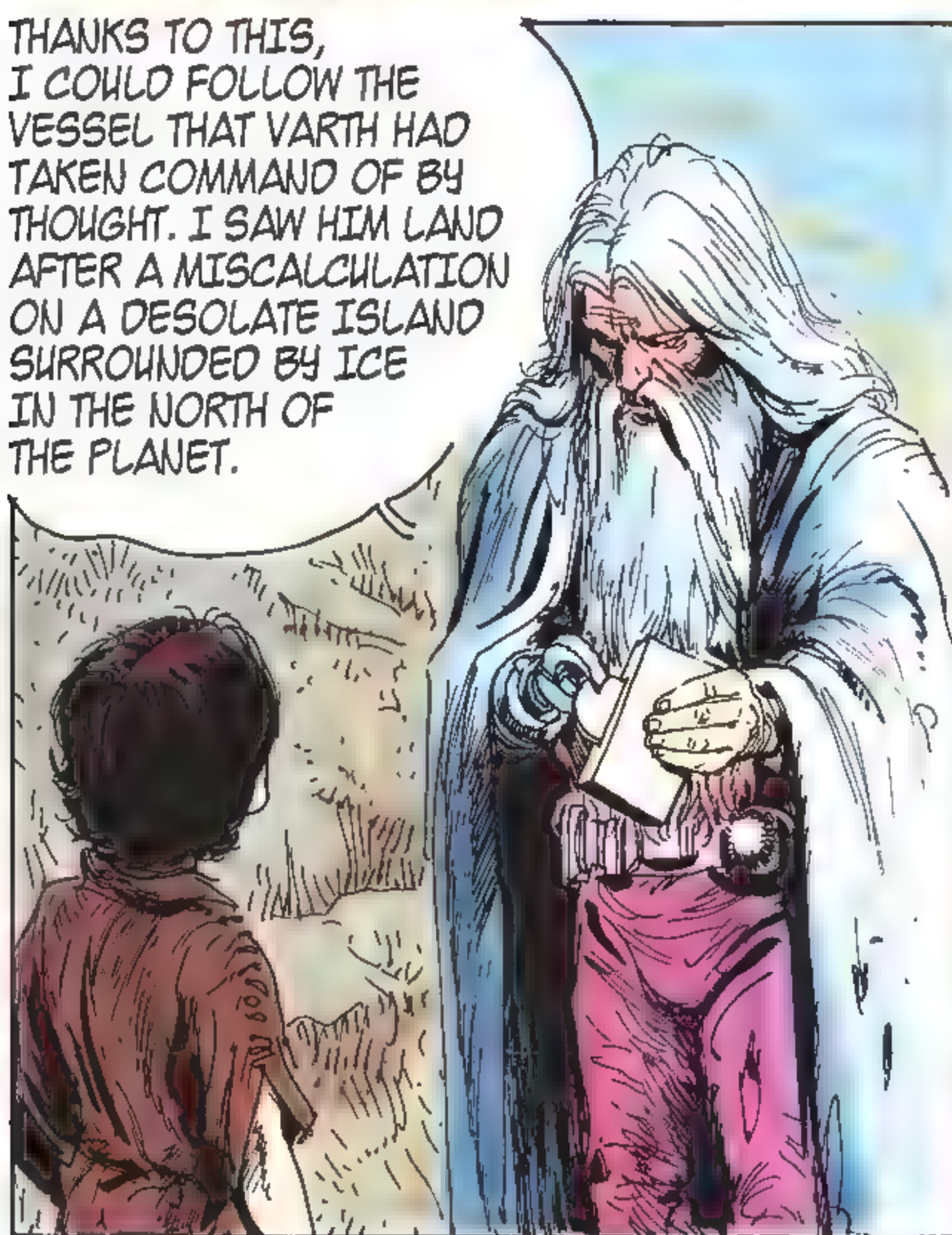
YOUR HAND!?
YOU...
YOU'RE?...

YES,
I AM
XARGOS.



THE ONE YOU SAW DEFEATED
BY YOUR FATHER IN THE
SPACE DUEL. YOUR
GRANDFATHER,
THORGAL!

THANKS TO THIS,
I COULD FOLLOW THE
VESSEL THAT VARTH HAD
TAKEN COMMAND OF BY
THOUGHT. I SAW HIM LAND
AFTER A MISCALCULATION
ON A DESOLATE ISLAND
SURROUNDED BY ICE
IN THE NORTH OF
THE PLANET.



THE VESSEL WAS DAMAGED IN THE
LANDING. THROUGH TIME AND SPACE
I SAW MY FORMER COMPANIONS
STRUGGLE IN VAIN TO REPAIR IT,
AND THEN SUCCUMB ONE AFTER THE
OTHER TO AN UNKNOWN ILLNESS.



I SAW YOUR FATHER AND THE LAST SURVIVORS
BUILD A BOAT TO ESCAPE THEIR PRISON. THE
STORM TOOK THEM AND I SAW YOU BORN IN THE
MIDDLE OF THIS STORM, THORGAL. THEN
I SAW YOUR MOTHER SAVE YOU BY PUTTING
HER NEWBORN IN THE RAFT WITH THIS, YOUR
TALISMAN.



THEN, OVER THE YEARS, I WATCHED YOU
GROW UP WITH THE VIKINGS WHO TOOK YOU
IN. I KNEW THAT, BY THE POWER OF YOUR
TALISMAN, YOU WOULD COME TO ME
ONE DAY. AND I WAITED
FOR YOU.



I ... I
UNDERSTAND...

YOU WAITED FOR
ME TO TELL ME ALL
OF THAT, RIGHT? TO
TELL ME WHO MY
PARENTS WERE
AND HOW I COULD
FIND THEM
AGAIN?



NOT EXACTLY,
MY CHILD.

I WAITED FOR YOU TO TAKE BACK
THIS DISK AND TO BE SURE OF
ERASING FROM YOUR MEMORY
AND FROM YOUR FLESH
EVERY TRACE OF YOUR
ORIGINS!





ERASE MY MEMORIES?!?... WHY?

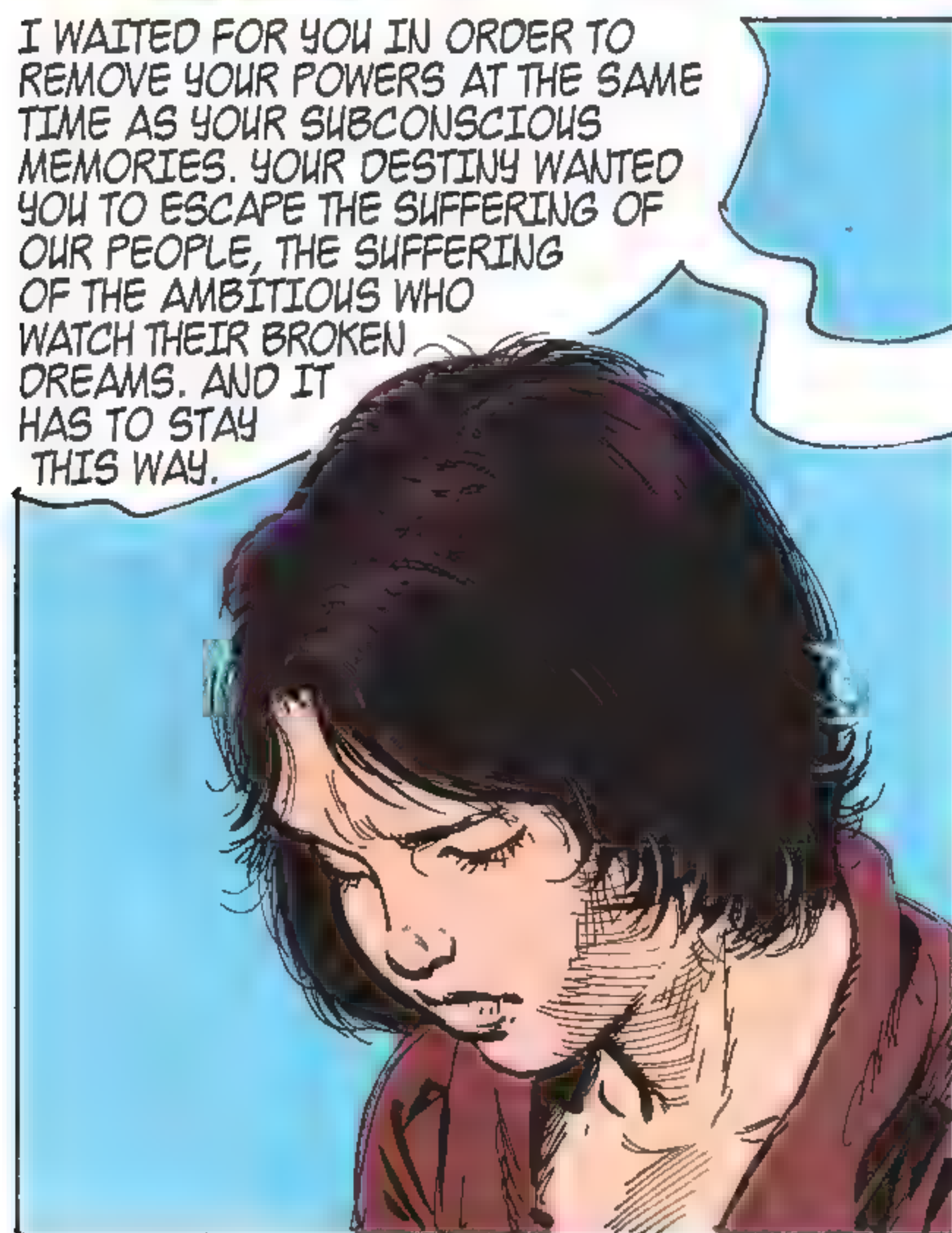
BECAUSE IT'S BETTER THAT WAY. I MADE A BIG MISTAKE BY ASKING MY DAUGHTER TO SEND OUR MEMORY.



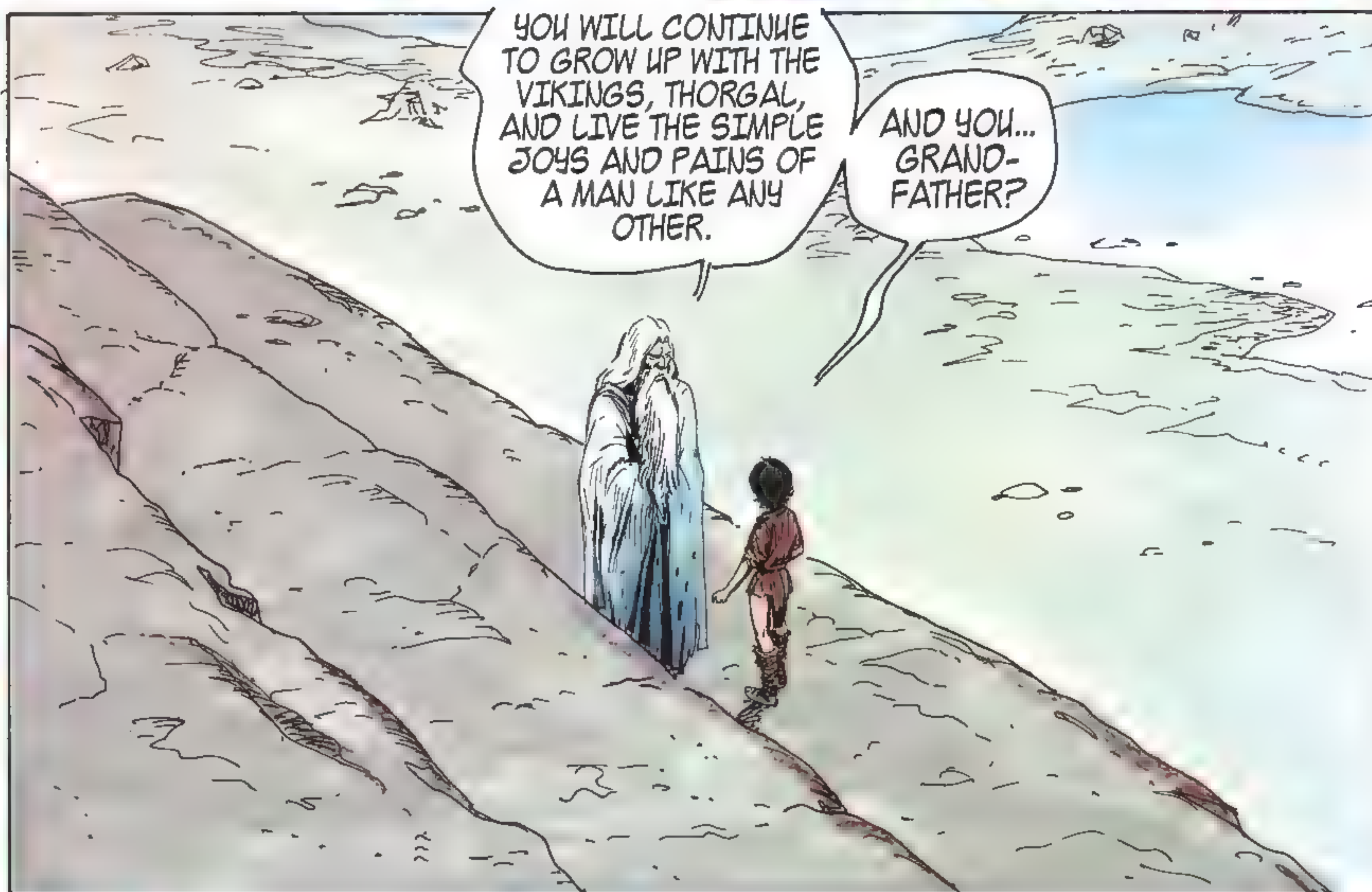
YOU SEE THE DEBRIS FROM MY SHUTTLE SPARKLING UP THERE? DIDN'T THE PRIESTS TELL YOU THAT A GOD CAME DOWN TO LIVE IN THE BURNT FOREST? YOUR FATHER WAS A DANGEROUS MAN, THORGAL, FOR HE WAS RIGHT.



YOU SEE, IT IS IN FACT EASY TO PRETEND TO BE A GOD WHEN YOU POSSESS SUPERIOR POWERS TO OTHER MEN. AND THERE'S A GREAT TEMPTATION TO USE THIS FACILITY TO RULE OVER ONE'S FELLOW MAN.



I WAITED FOR YOU IN ORDER TO REMOVE YOUR POWERS AT THE SAME TIME AS YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MEMORIES. YOUR DESTINY WANTED YOU TO ESCAPE THE SUFFERING OF OUR PEOPLE, THE SUFFERING OF THE AMBITIOUS WHO WATCH THEIR BROKEN DREAMS. AND IT HAS TO STAY THIS WAY.



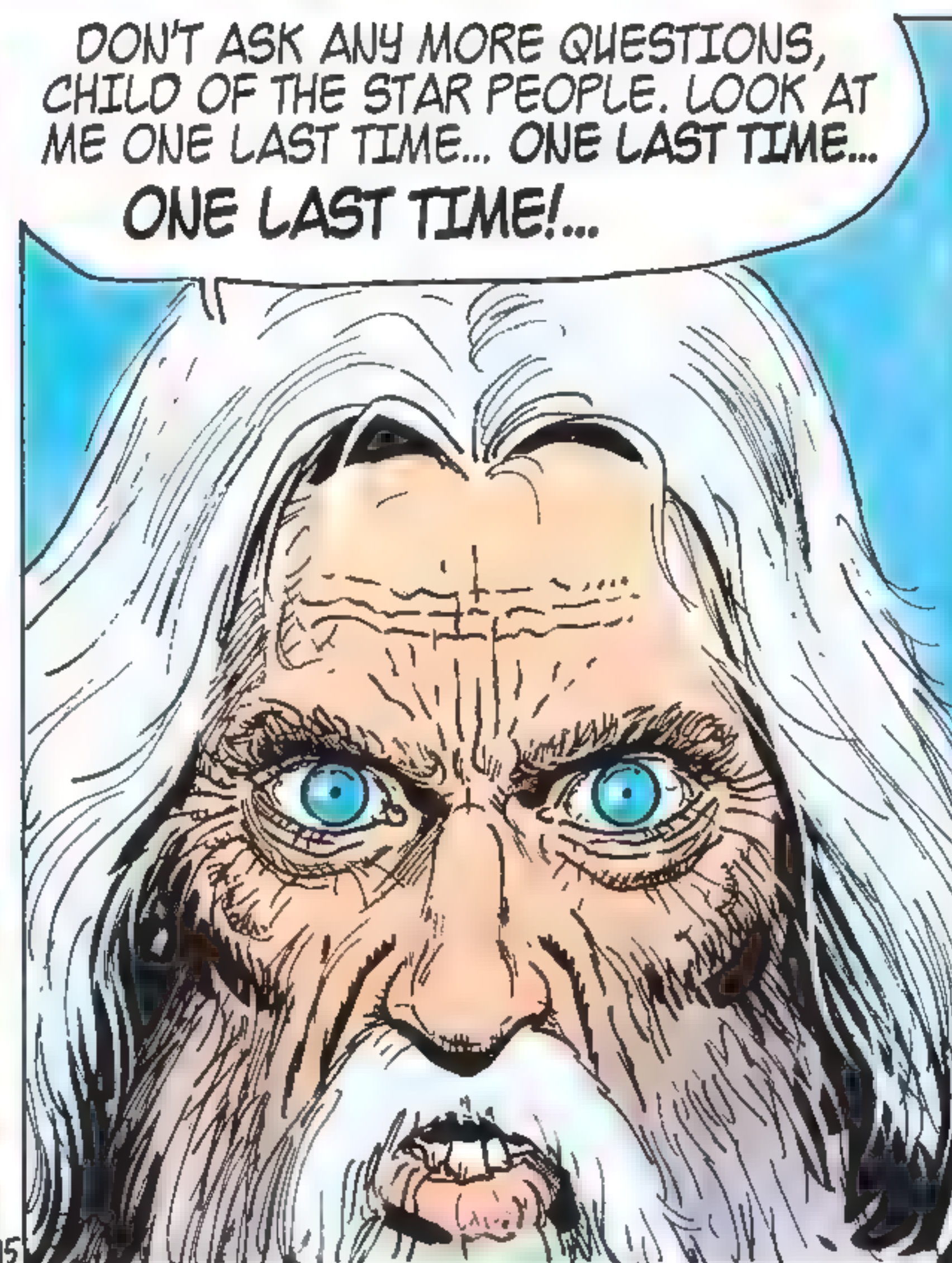
YOU WILL CONTINUE TO GROW UP WITH THE VIKINGS, THORGAL, AND LIVE THE SIMPLE JOYS AND PAINS OF A MAN LIKE ANY OTHER.

AND YOU... GRAND-FATHER?

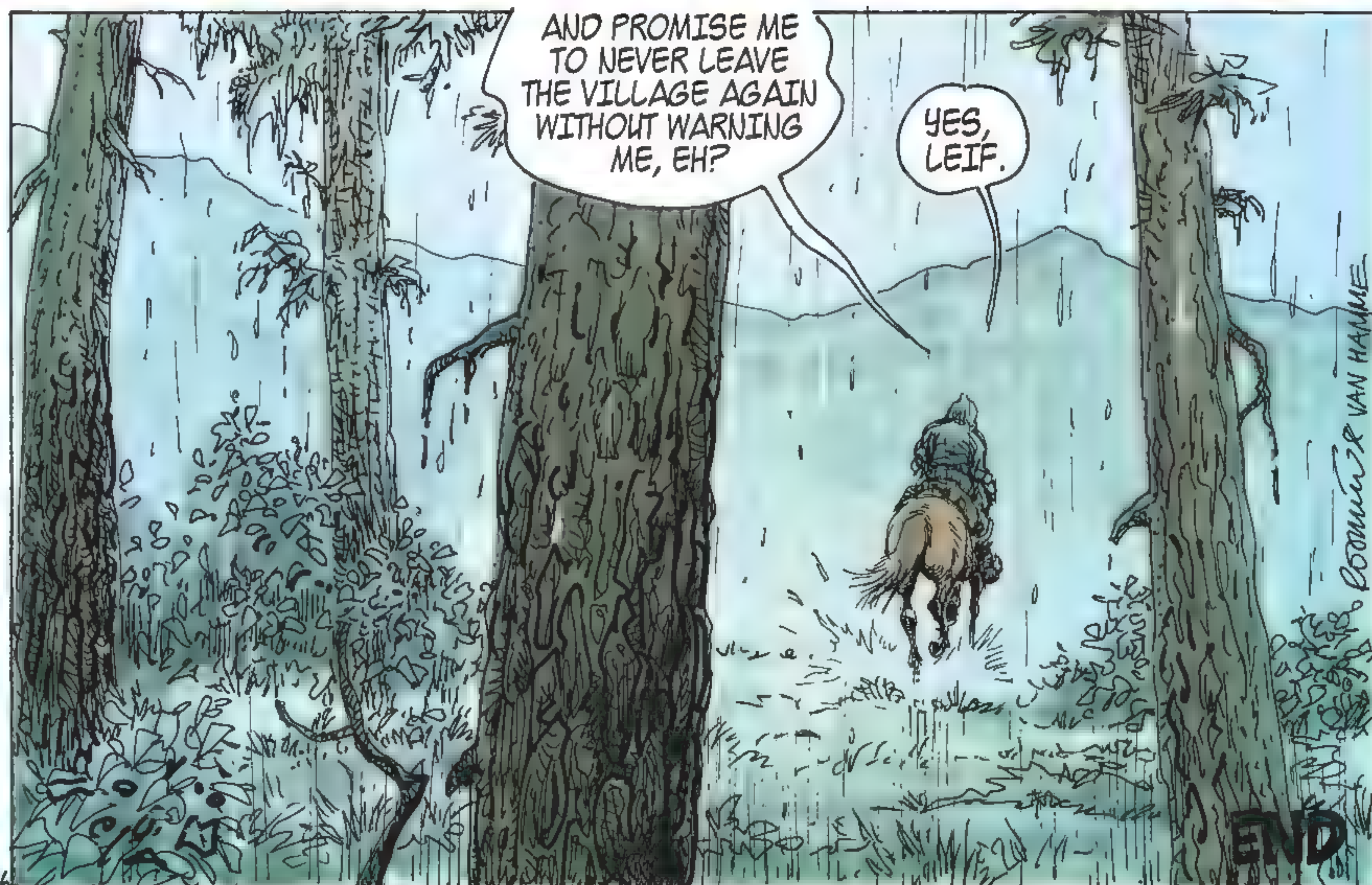


MY JOB HERE IS DONE. I WILL BOARD MY SHUTTLE AND TAKE OUR MEMORY SO THAT, IN A FEW HOURS, WHAT YOU JUST LEARNED AND LIVED WILL HAVE NEVER EXISTED FOR YOU.

WILL YOU GO BACK?



DON'T ASK ANY MORE QUESTIONS, CHILD OF THE STAR PEOPLE. LOOK AT ME ONE LAST TIME... ONE LAST TIME... ONE LAST TIME!...





THORCAL



Aaricia

ROSINSKI-VAN HAMME



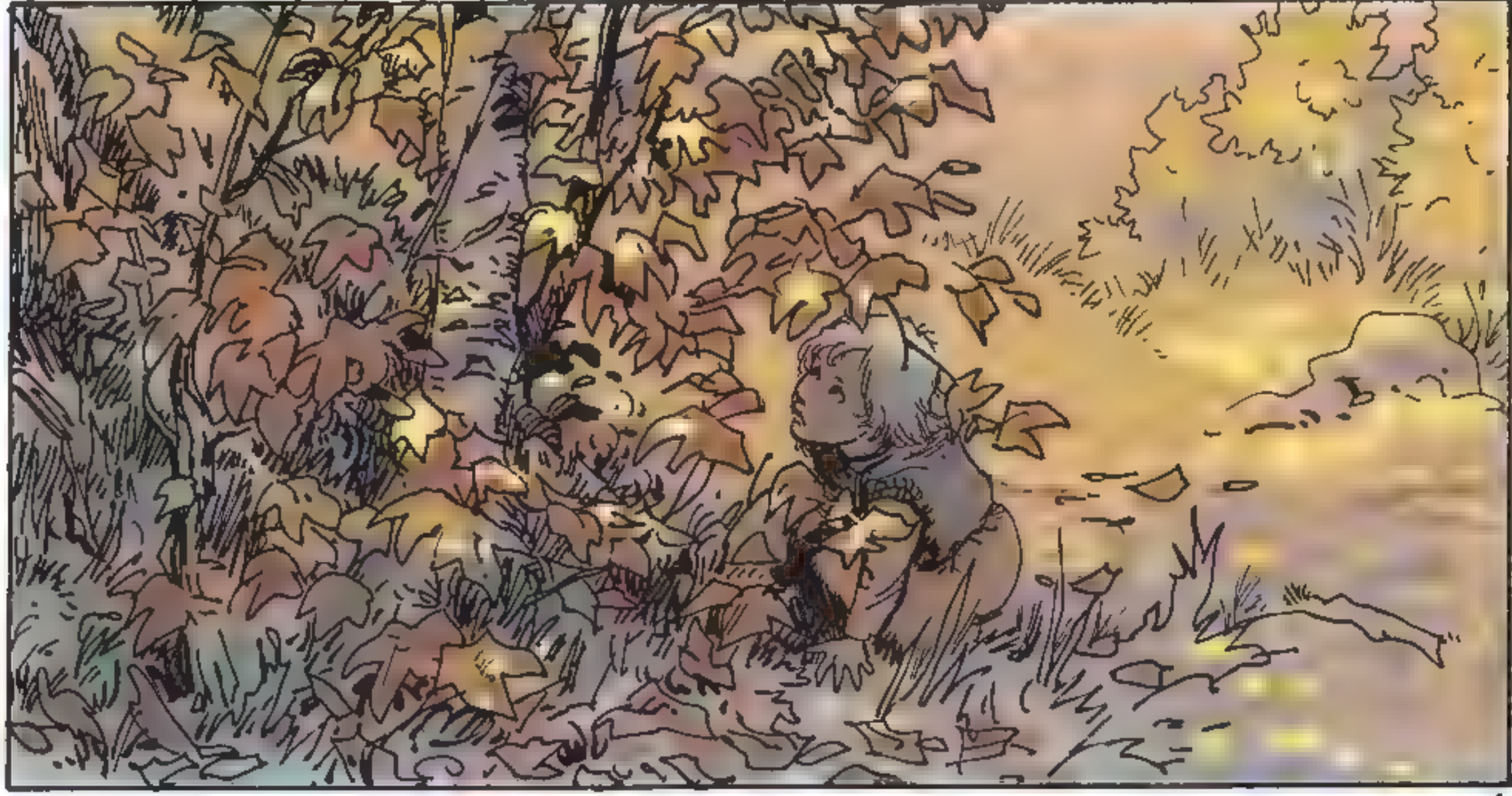
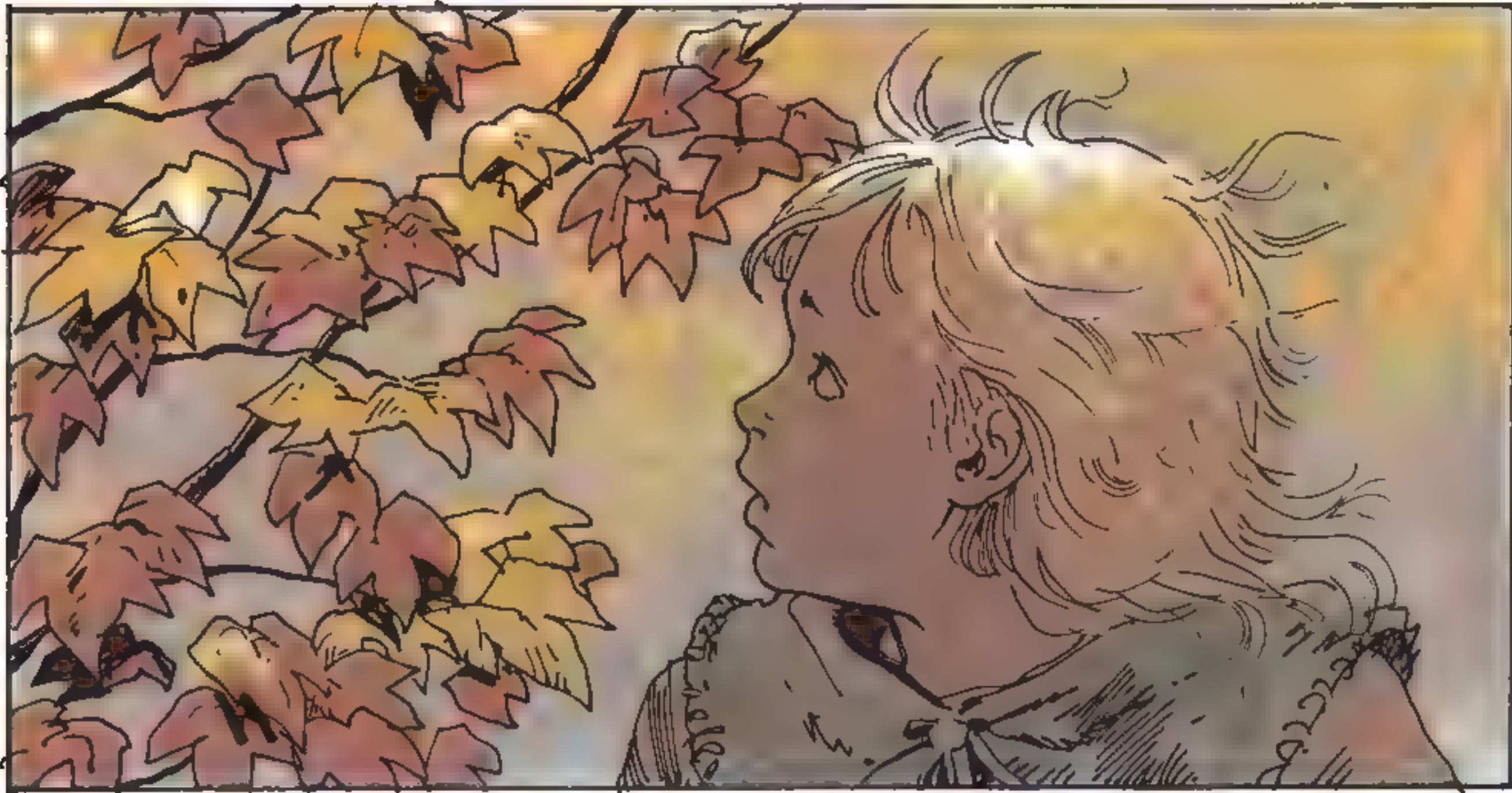
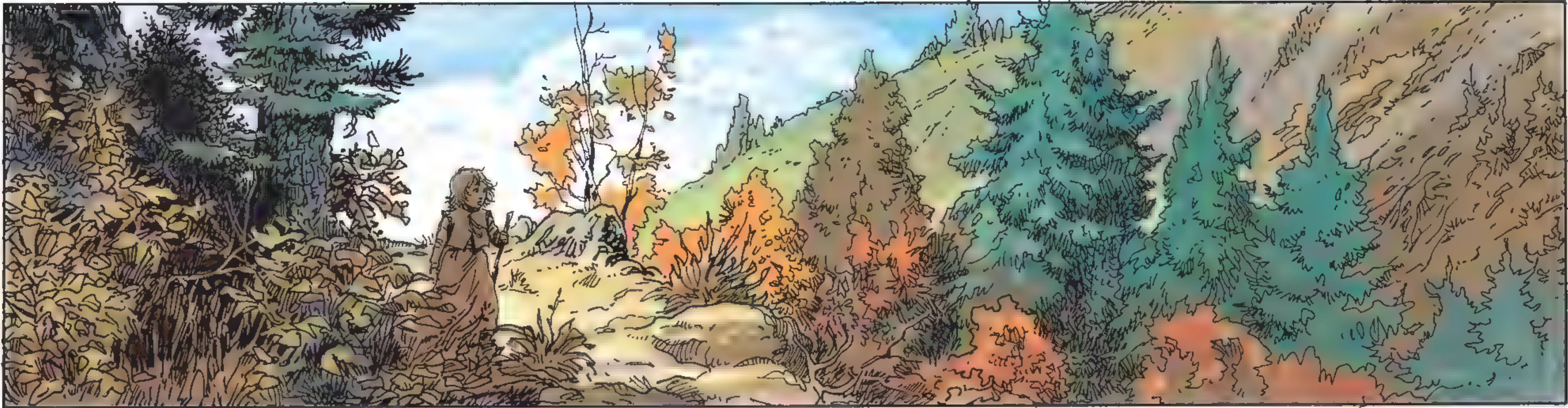
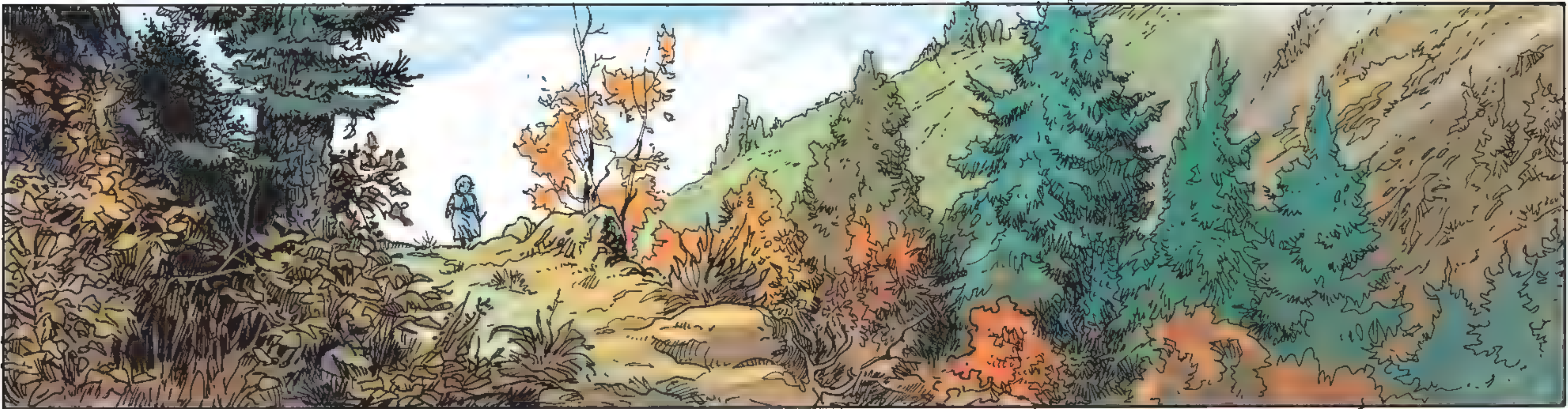
ROSINSKI-VAN HAMME

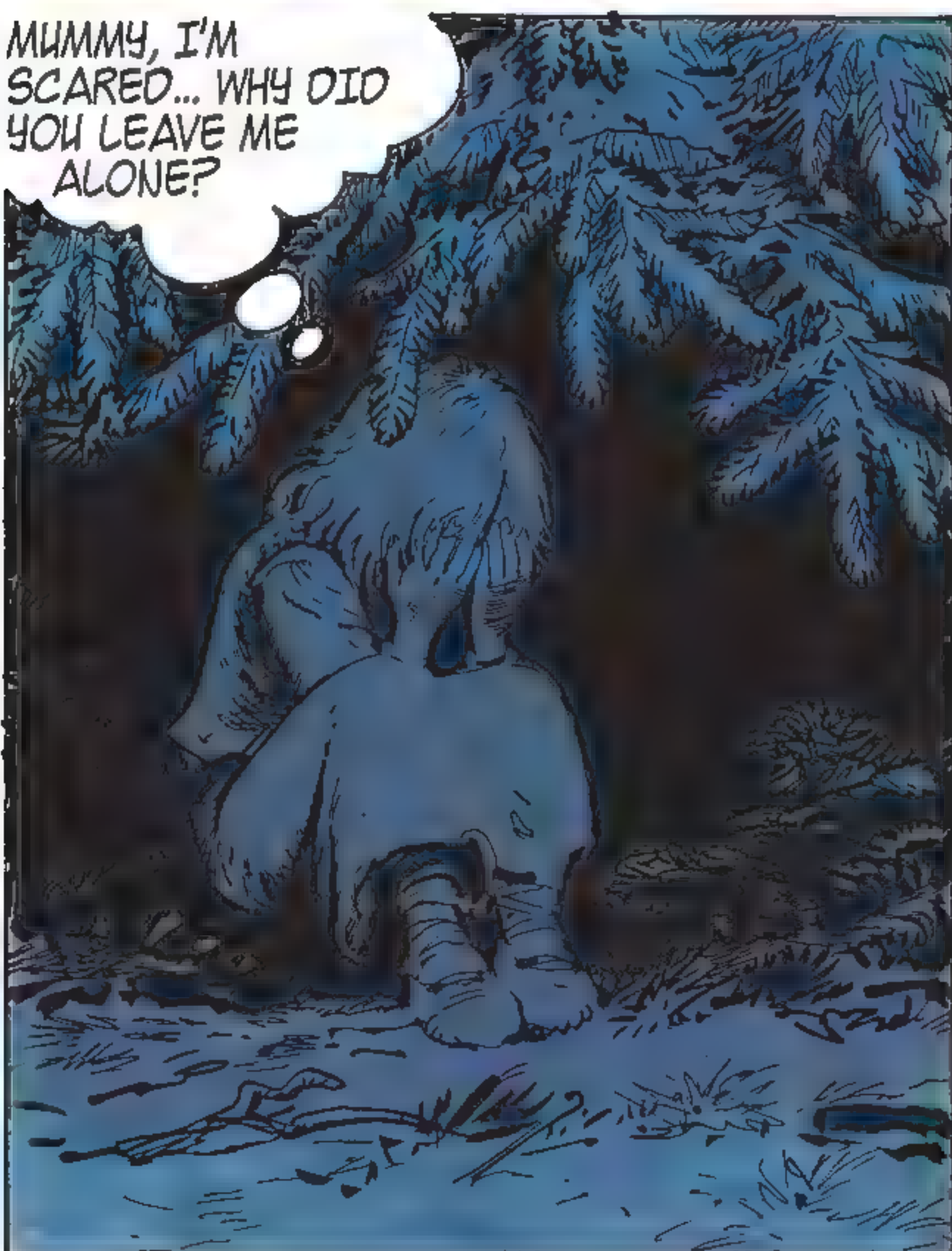
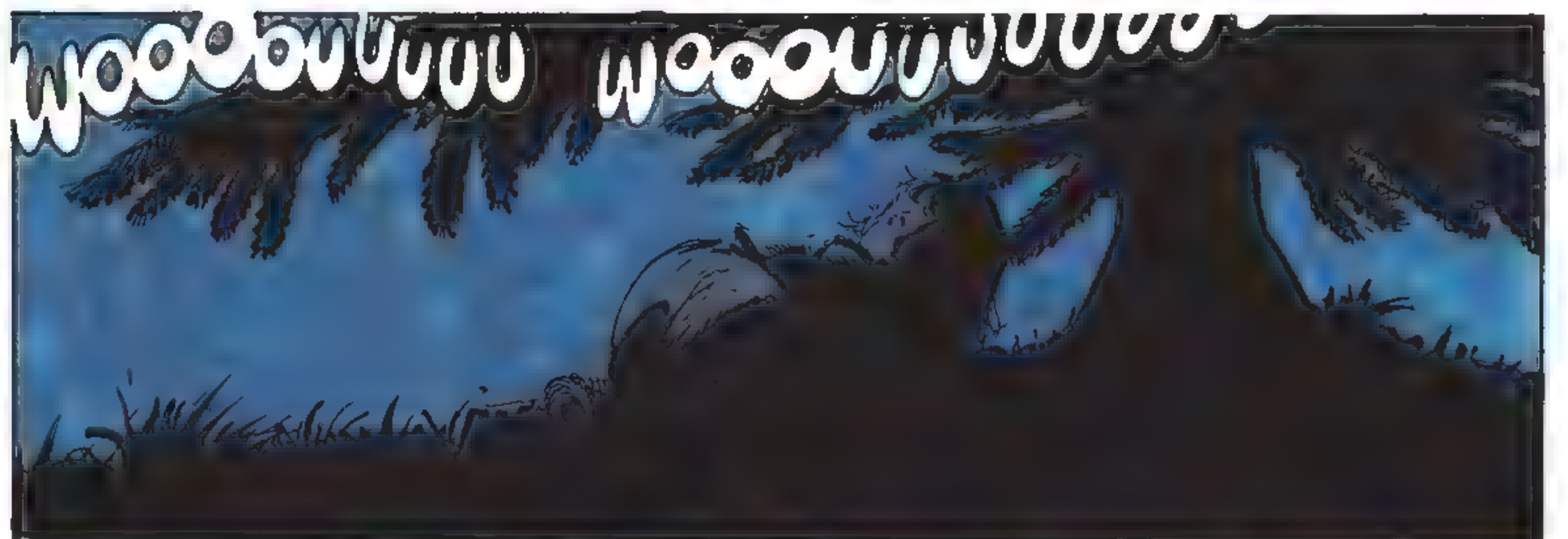
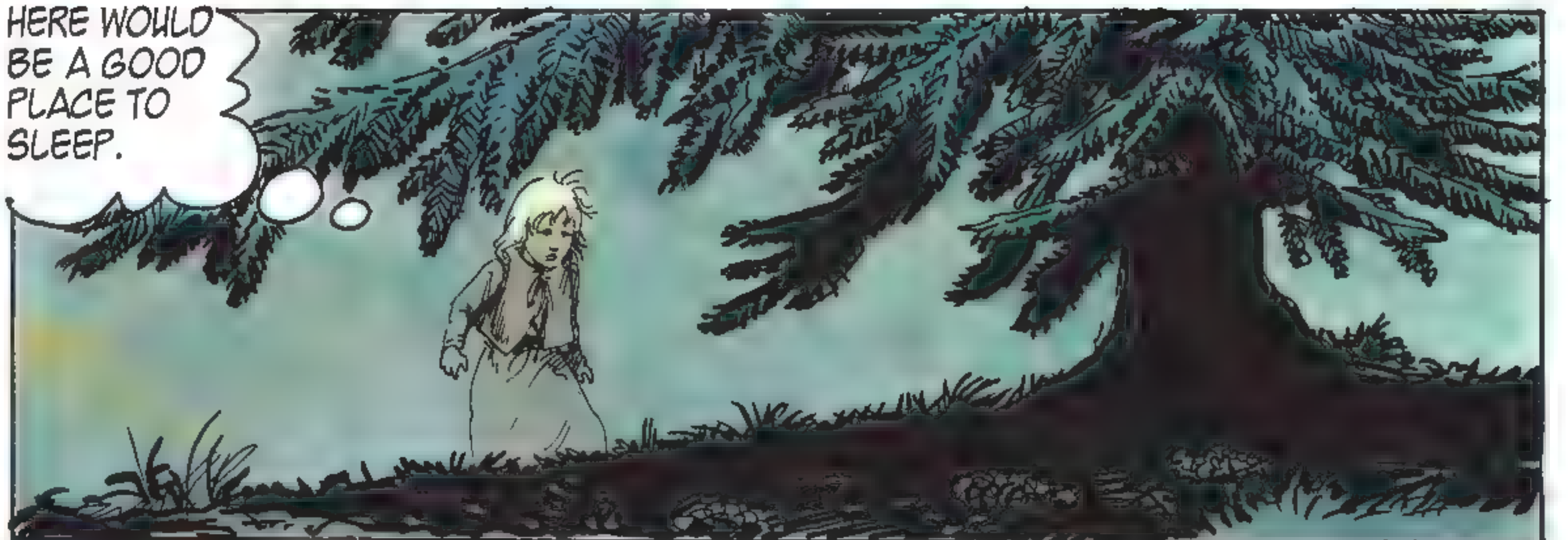
THORGAL

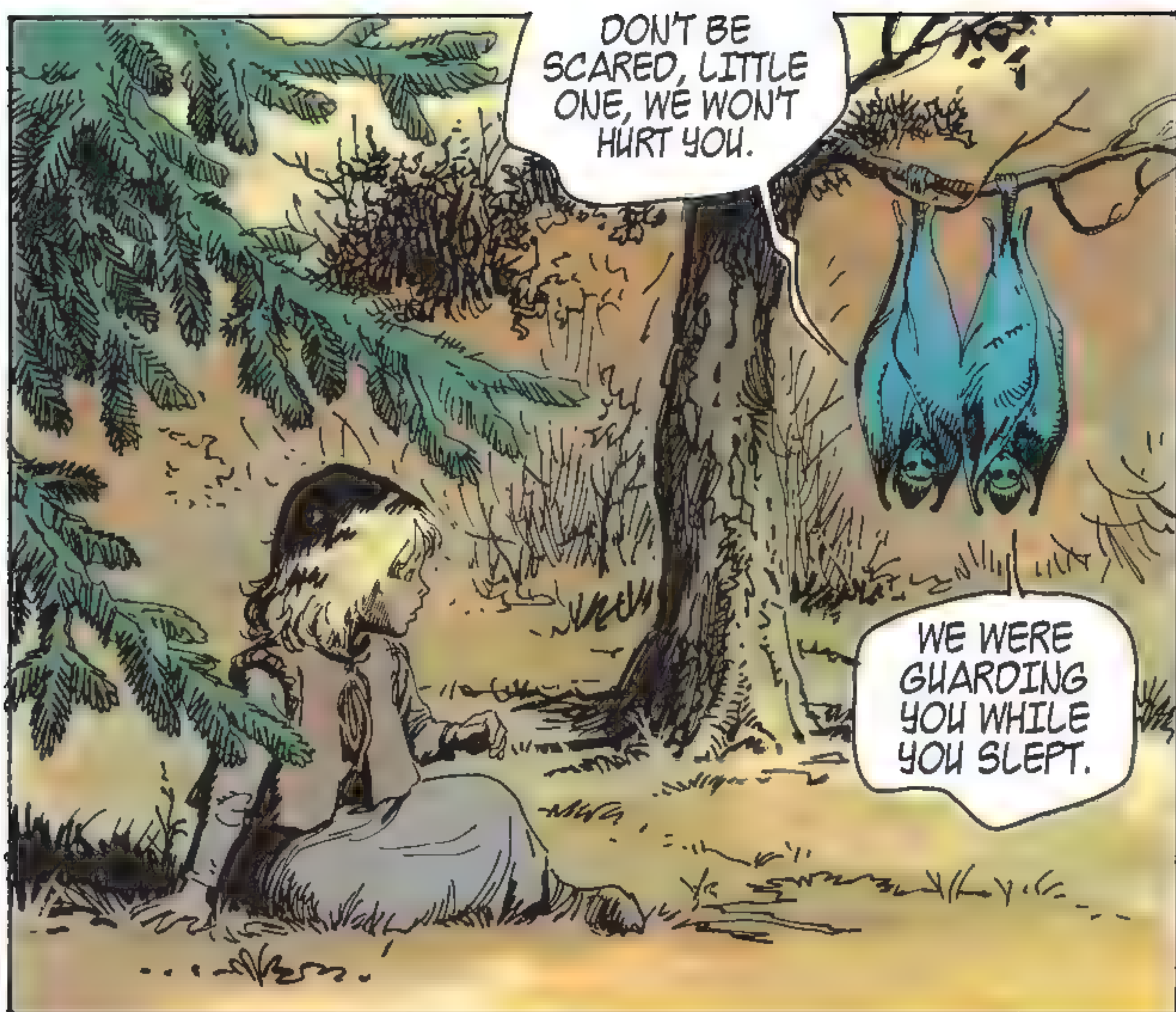
Aaricia



ODIN'S MOUNTAIN

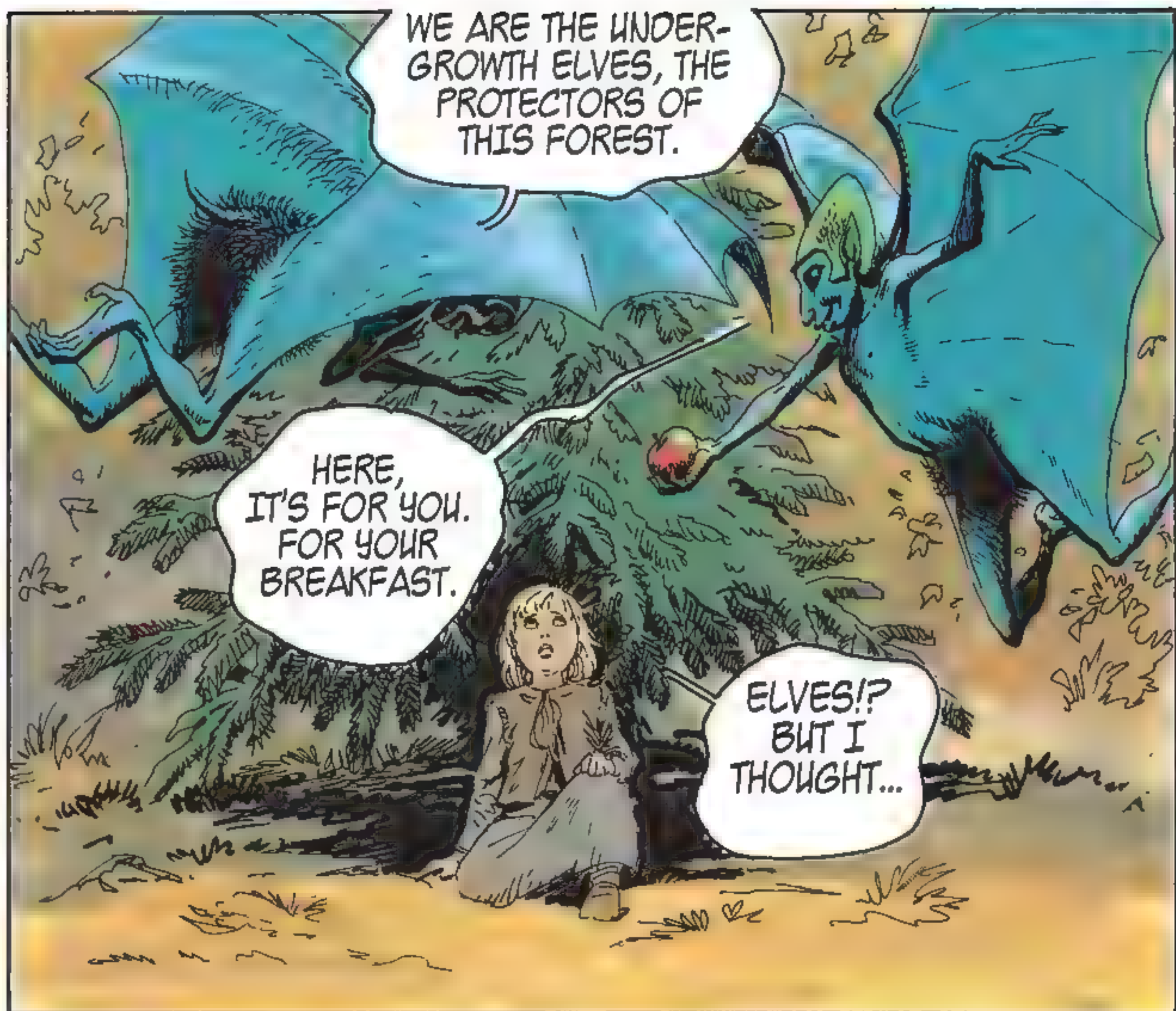






DON'T BE SCARED, LITTLE ONE, WE WON'T HURT YOU.

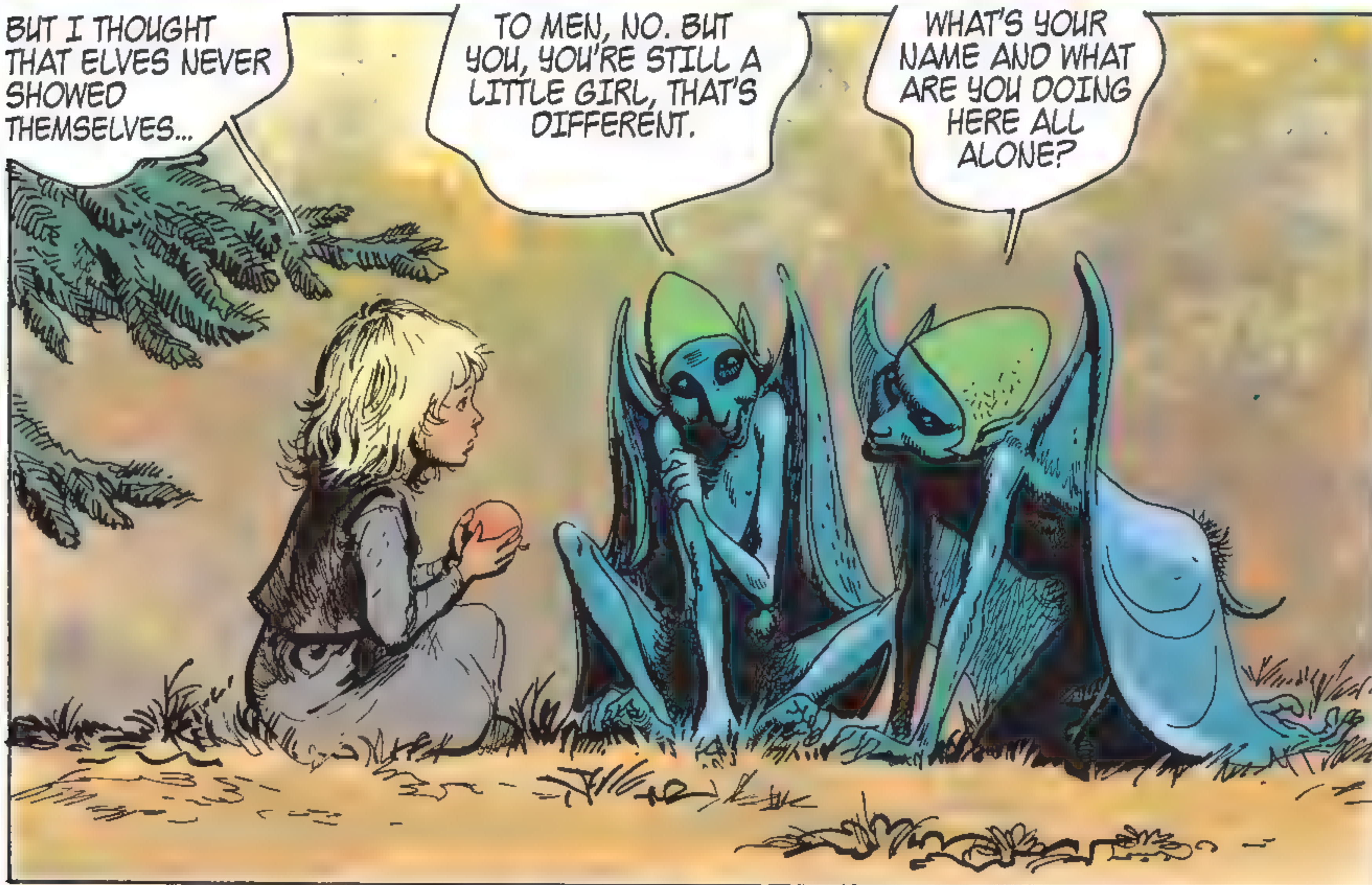
WE WERE GUARDING YOU WHILE YOU SLEPT.



WE ARE THE UNDER-GROWTH ELVES, THE PROTECTORS OF THIS FOREST.

HERE, IT'S FOR YOU. FOR YOUR BREAKFAST.

ELVES!? BUT I THOUGHT...



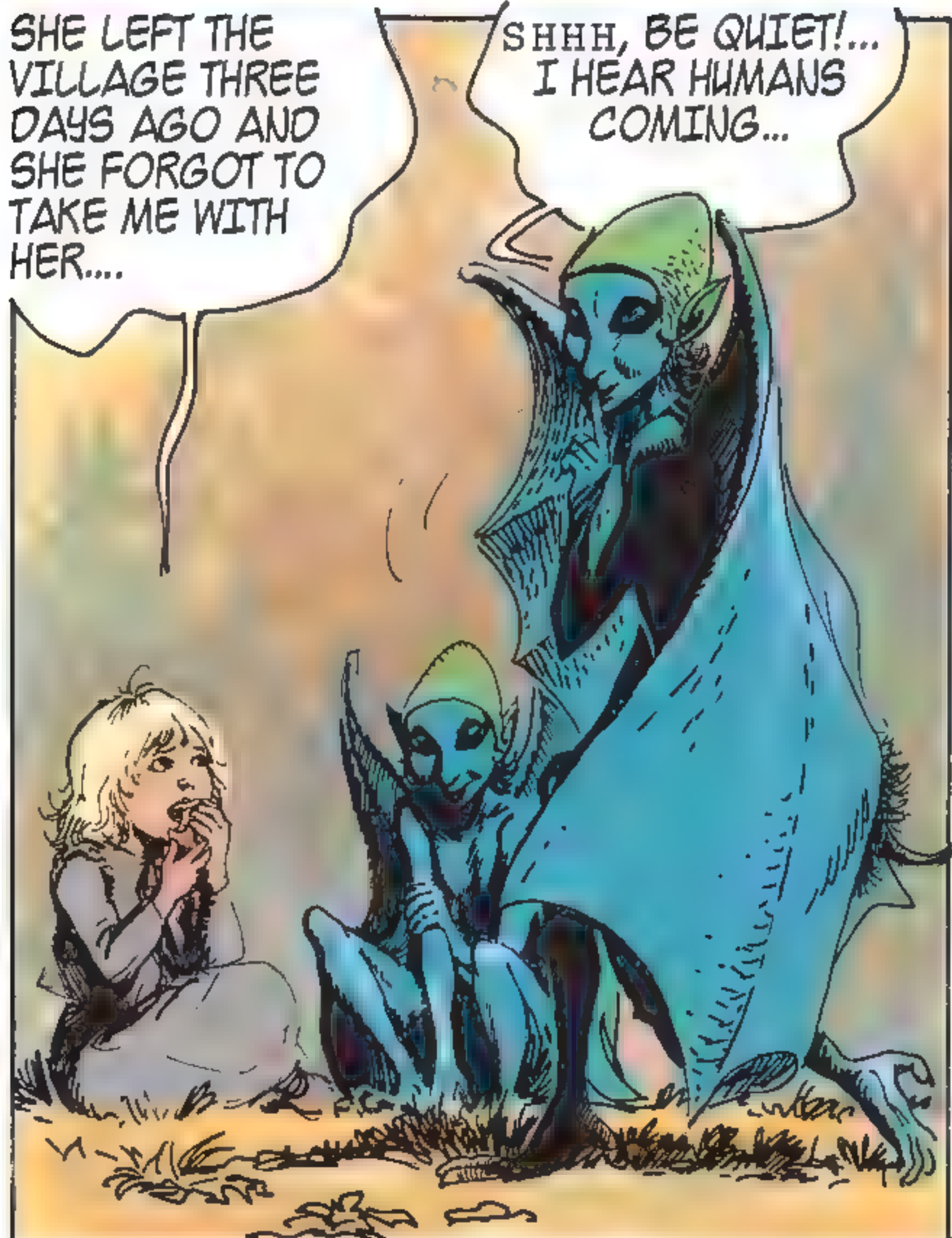
BUT I THOUGHT THAT ELVES NEVER SHOWED THEMSELVES...

TO MEN, NO. BUT YOU, YOU'RE STILL A LITTLE GIRL, THAT'S DIFFERENT.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ALL ALONE?



MY NAME IS AARICIA AND I CAME TO LOOK FOR MY MUMMY.

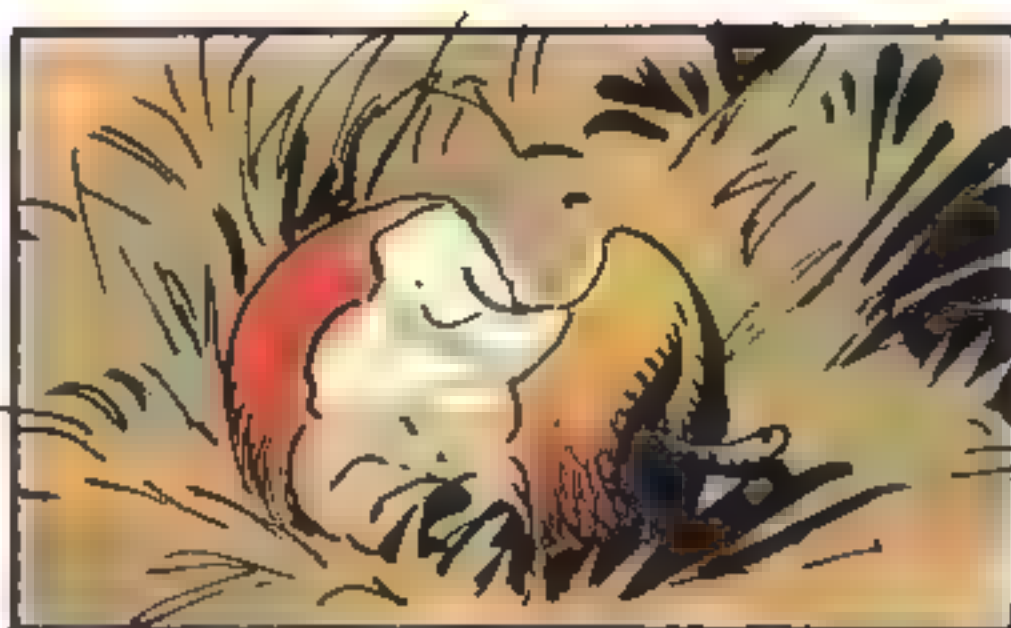
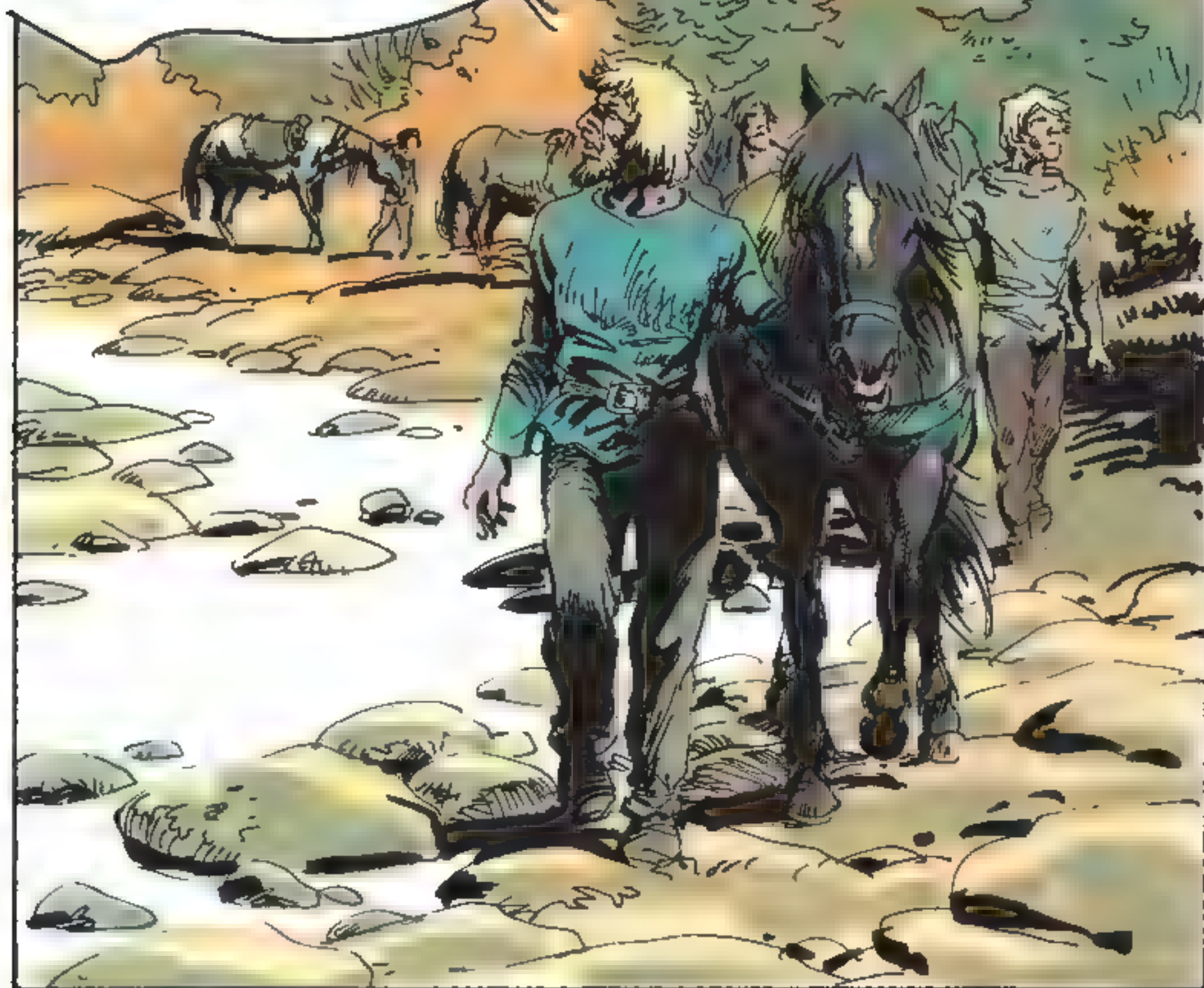


SHE LEFT THE VILLAGE THREE DAYS AGO AND SHE FORGOT TO TAKE ME WITH HER....

SHHH, BE QUIET!... I HEAR HUMANS COMING...



BY ALL THE TWISTED
RINGS OF THE SNAKE
OF MIDGARD, THIS
BLASTED KID COULDN'T
HAVE GONE FAR...



HEY, THORGAL!
STILL
DREAMING?

I'M COMING,
I'M COMING...

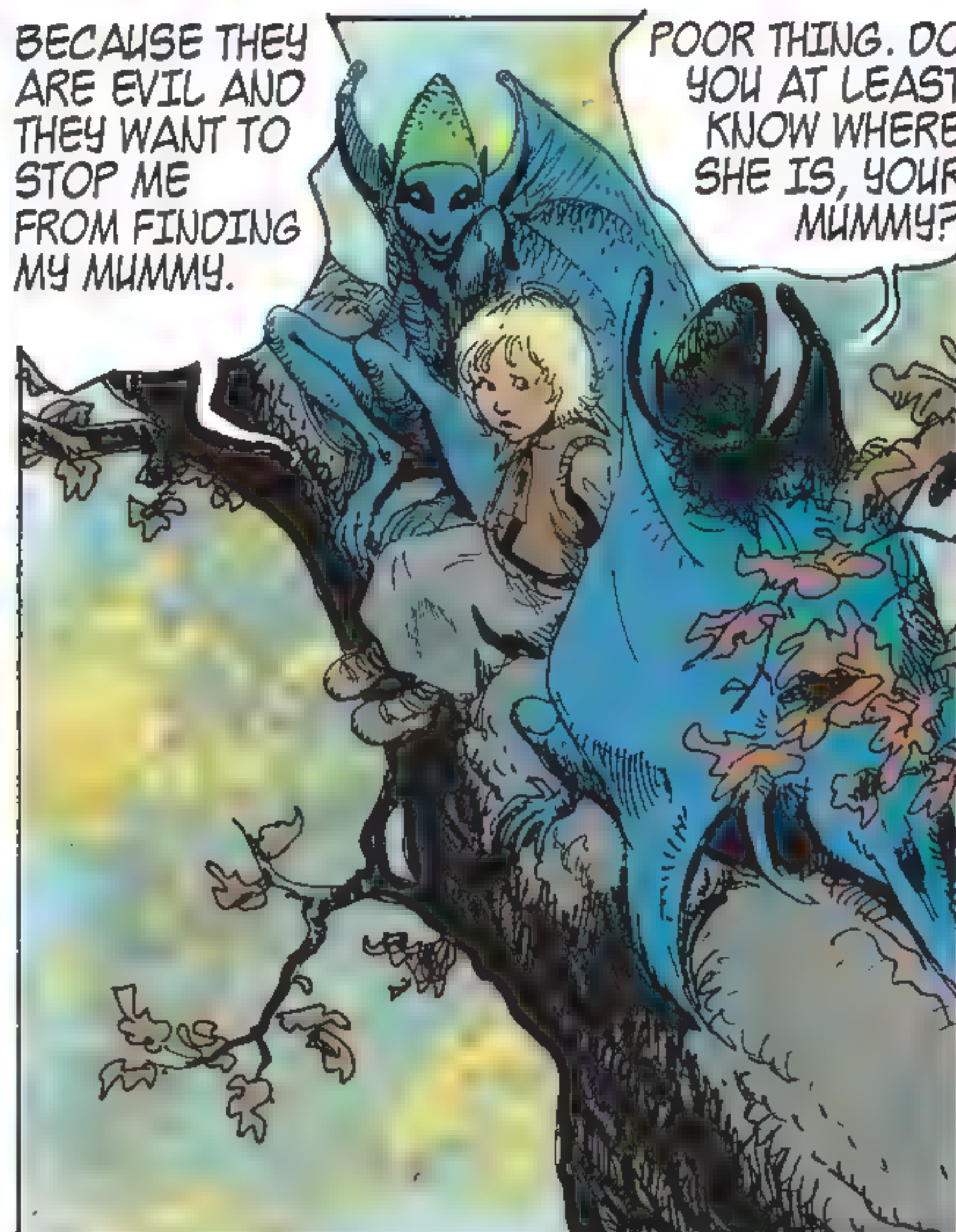


GOOD, THEY'VE
GONE.



WHY ARE
THESE MEN
LOOKING
FOR YOU,
AARICIA?

BECAUSE THEY
ARE EVIL AND
THEY WANT TO
STOP ME
FROM FINDING
MY MUMMY.

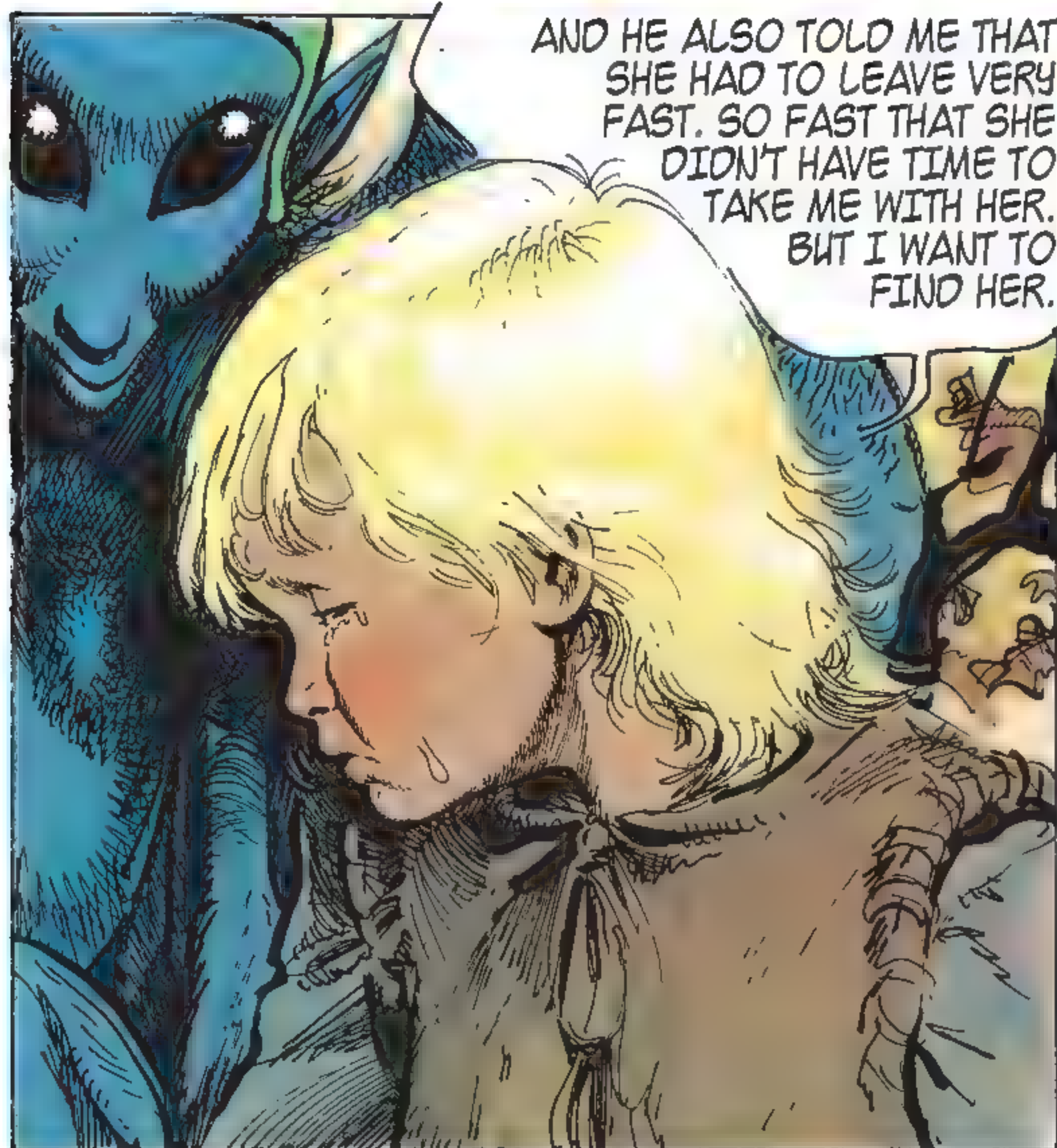


POOR THING. DO
YOU AT LEAST
KNOW WHERE
SHE IS, YOUR
MUMMY?

OF COURSE. MY FATHER TOLD ME THAT
SHE WENT TO LIVE IN A GREAT PALACE
ON TOP OF A MOUNTAIN SO HIGH THAT IT
TOUCHES THE SKY. A MARVELLOUS PALACE
WHERE EVERY DAY IS A PARTY.

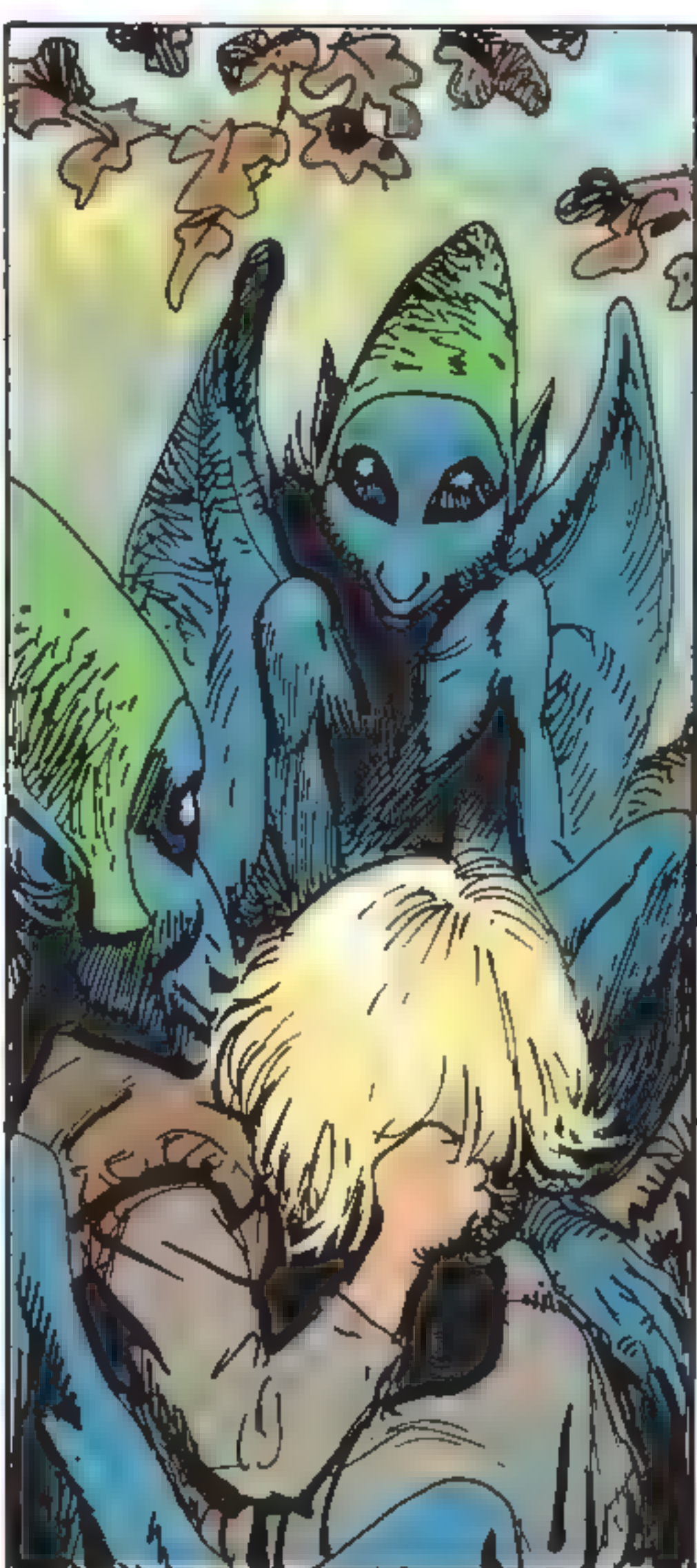


AND HE ALSO TOLD ME THAT
SHE HAD TO LEAVE VERY
FAST. SO FAST THAT SHE
DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO
TAKE ME WITH HER.
BUT I WANT TO
FIND HER.

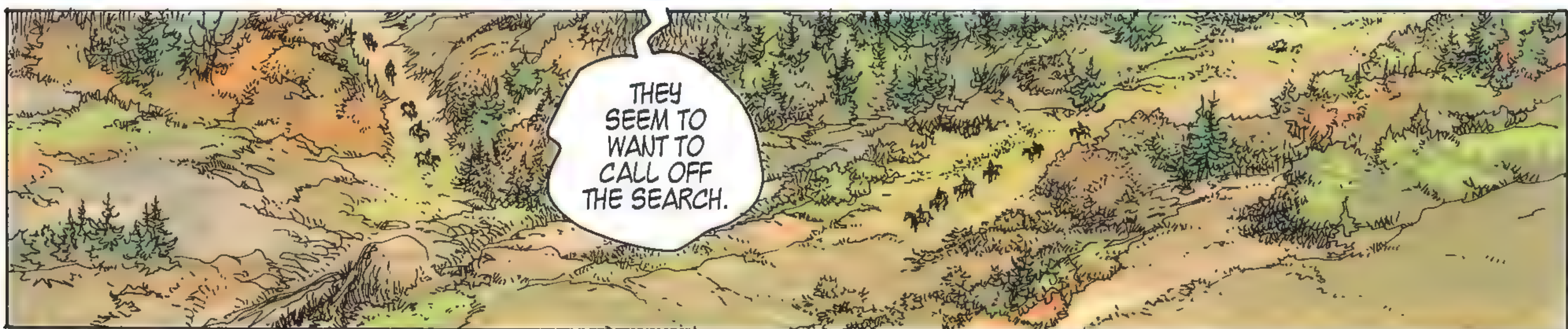
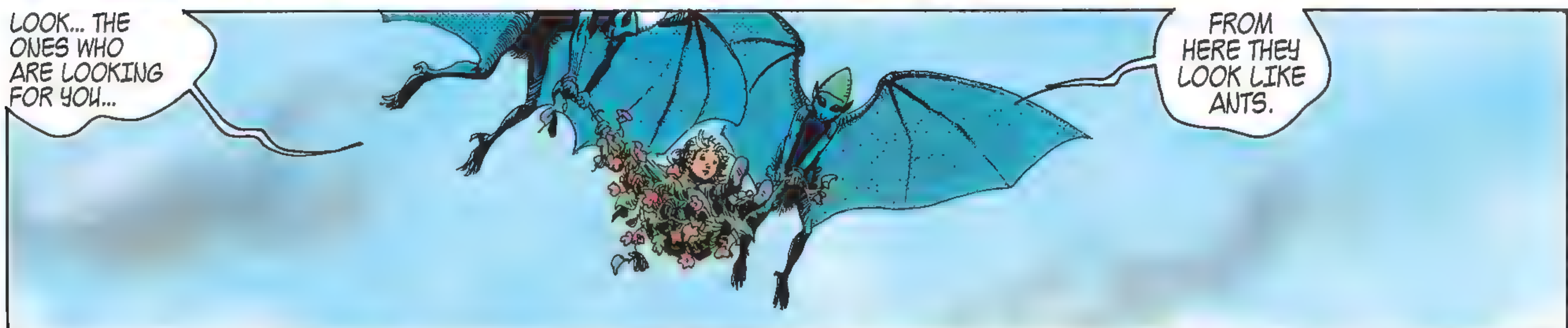
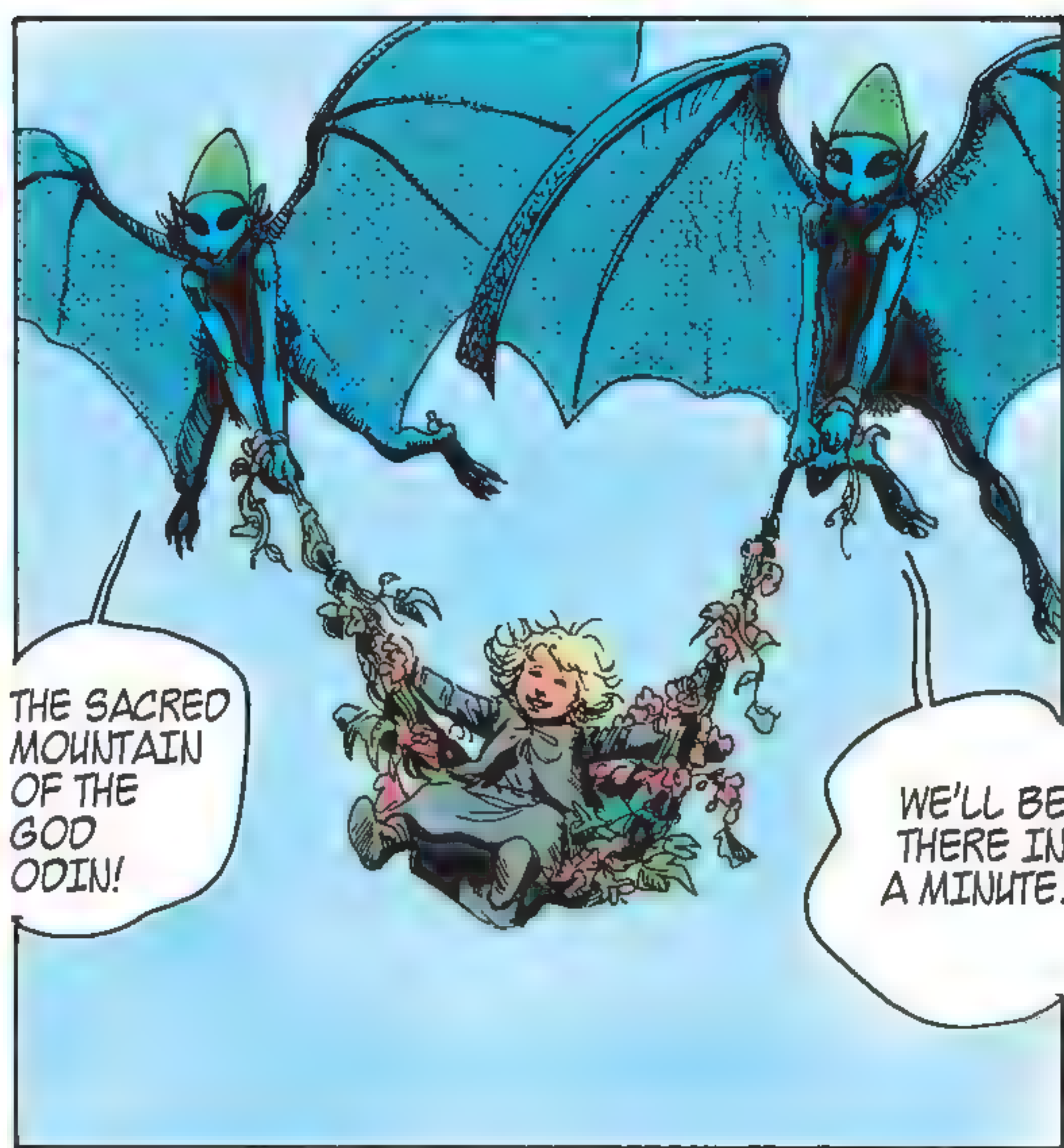
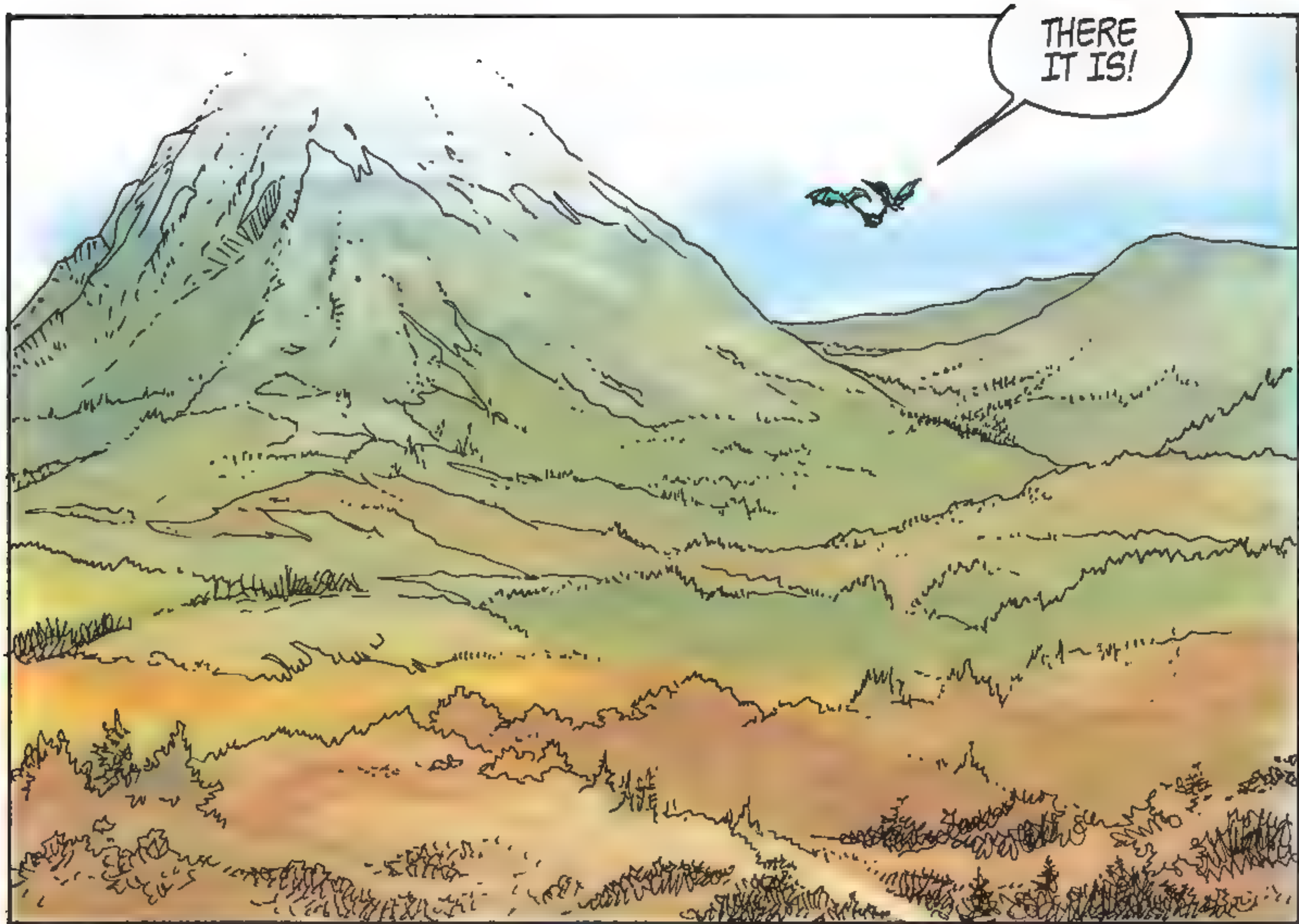


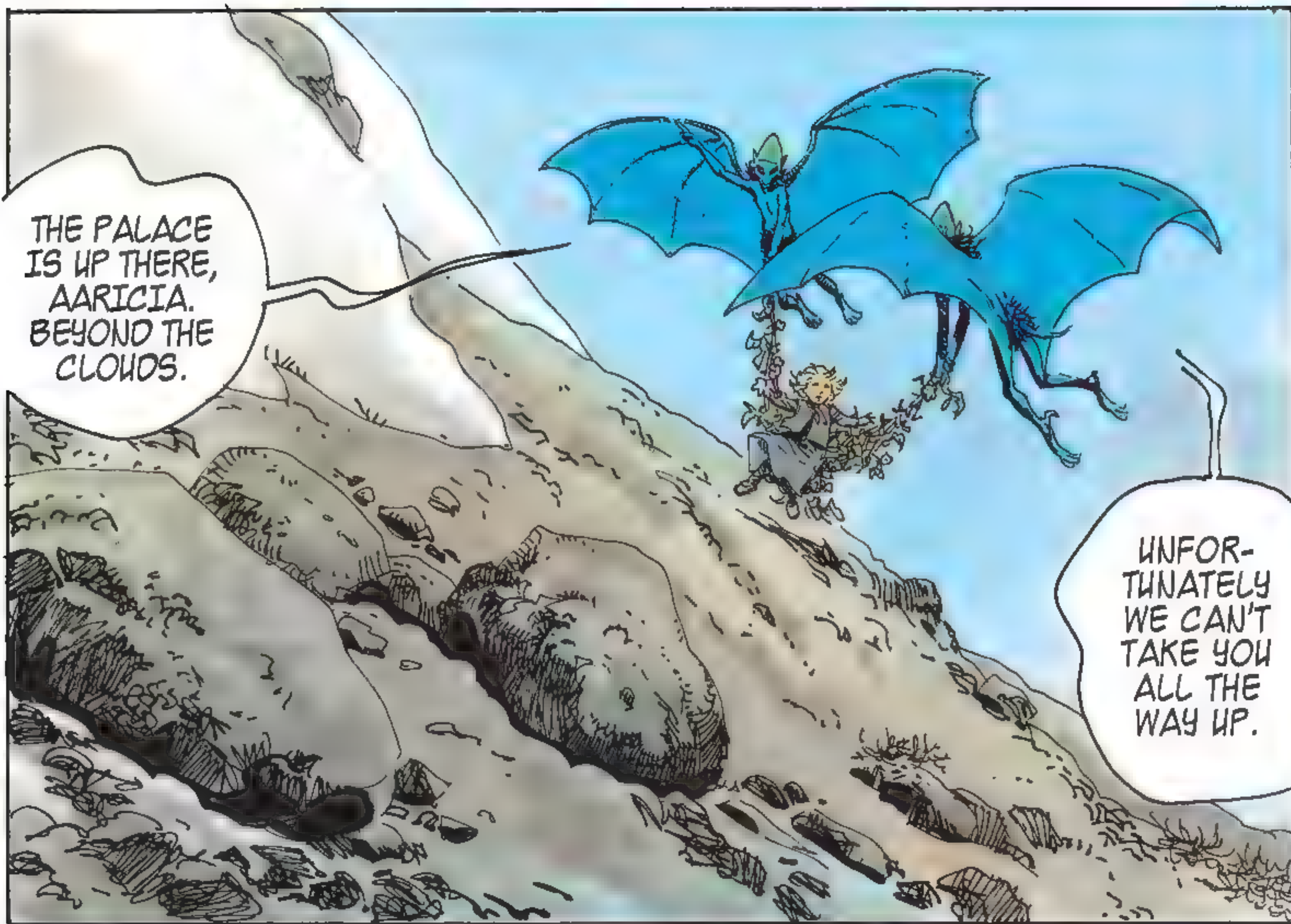
PERHAPS WE
COULD HELP YOU,
AARICIA!

DO YOU KNOW
THE NAME OF THIS
MOUNTAIN?



I THINK
SO, YES. IT'S
**ODIN'S
MOUNTAIN!**



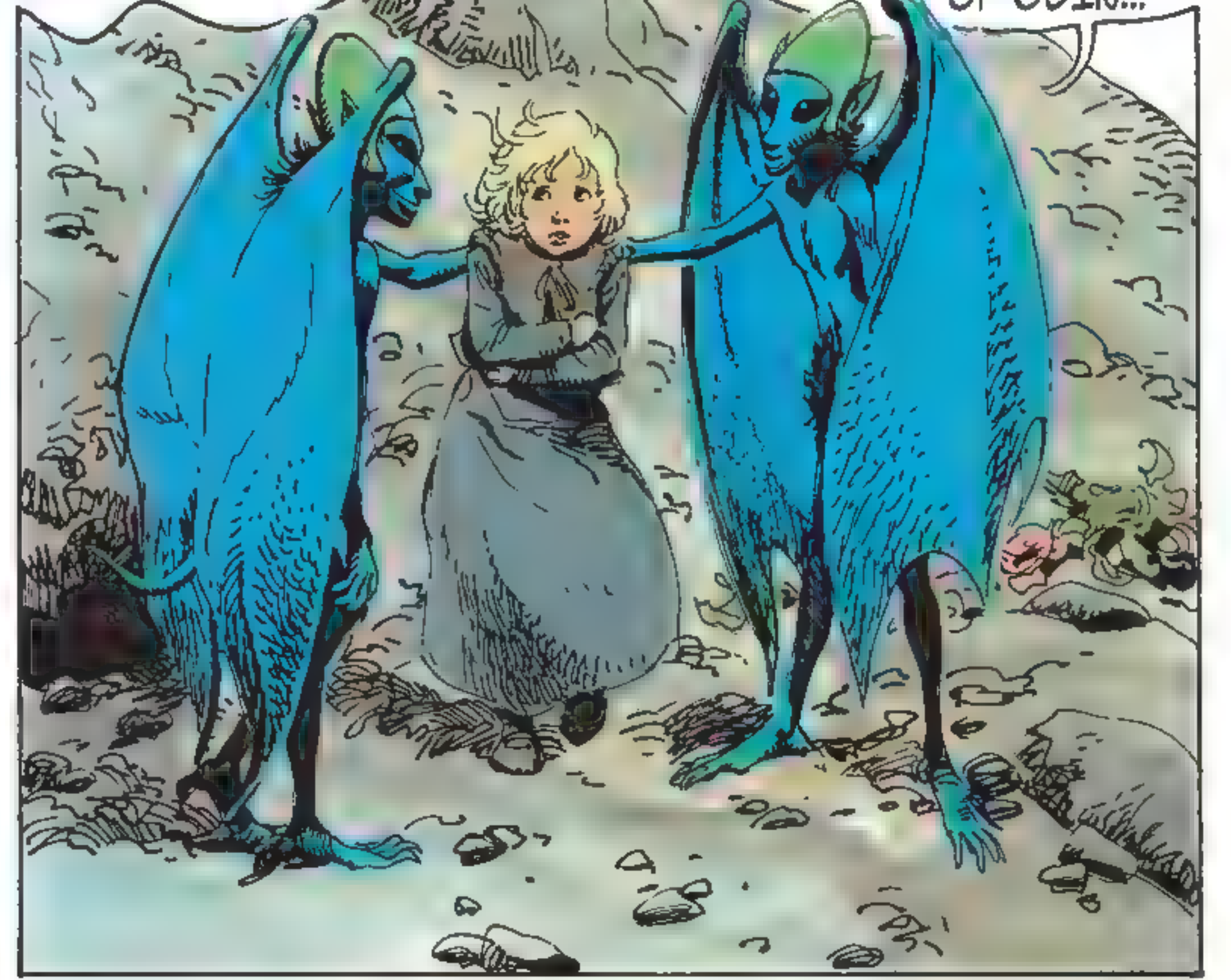


THE PALACE
IS UP THERE,
AARICIA.
BEYOND THE
CLOUDS.

UNFOR-
TUNATELY
WE CAN'T
TAKE YOU
ALL THE
WAY UP.

THE UNDERGROWTH
ELVES CAN'T GO
ABOVE THE CLOUDS.
OTHERWISE THEIR
WINGS WOULD
FREEZE.

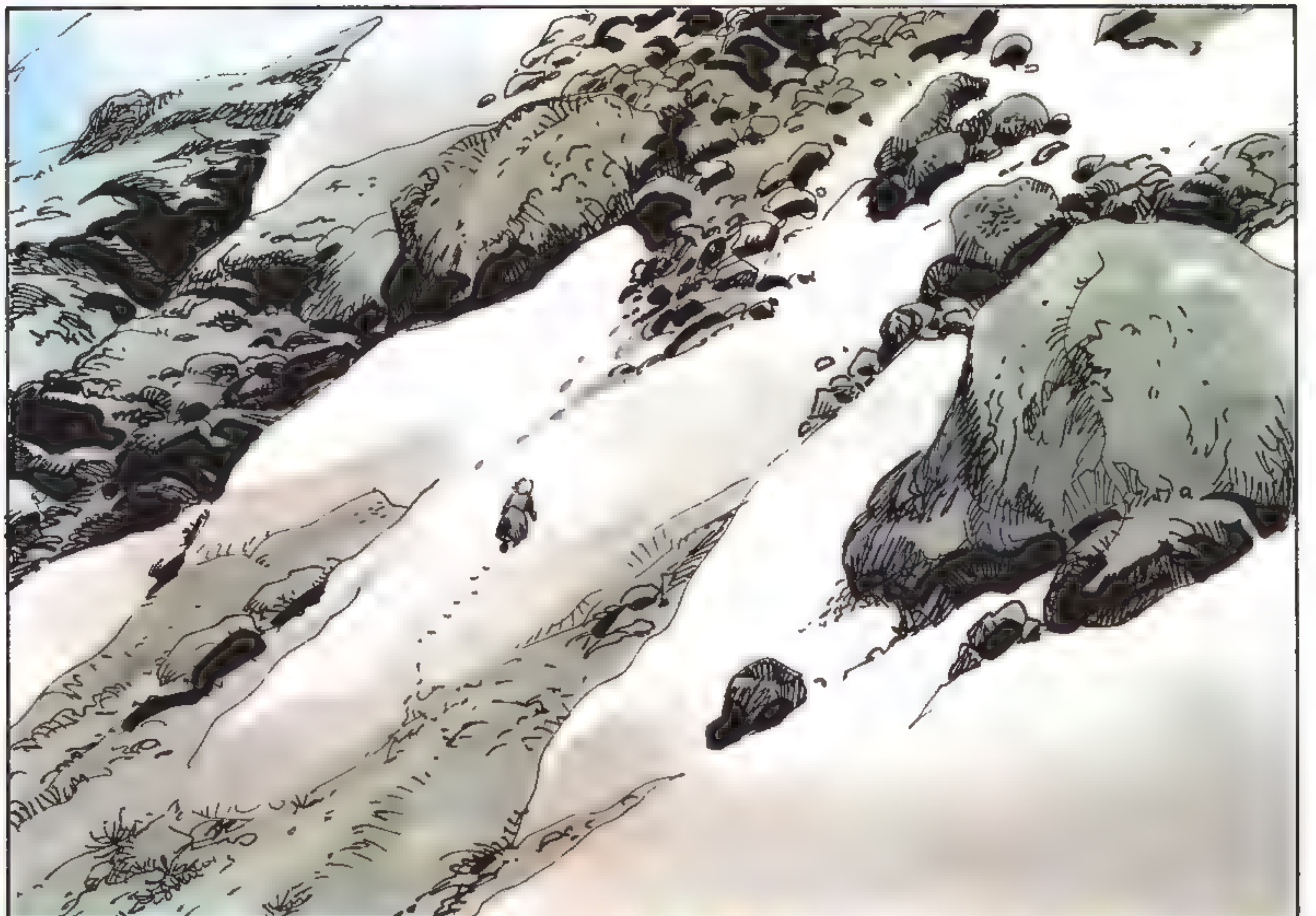
YOU WILL HAVE TO
CARRY ON ALONE,
LITTLE GIRL. BUT YOU
WILL SEE HOW HAPPY
YOU WILL BE WITH YOUR
MUMMY IN THE PALACE
OF ODIN...



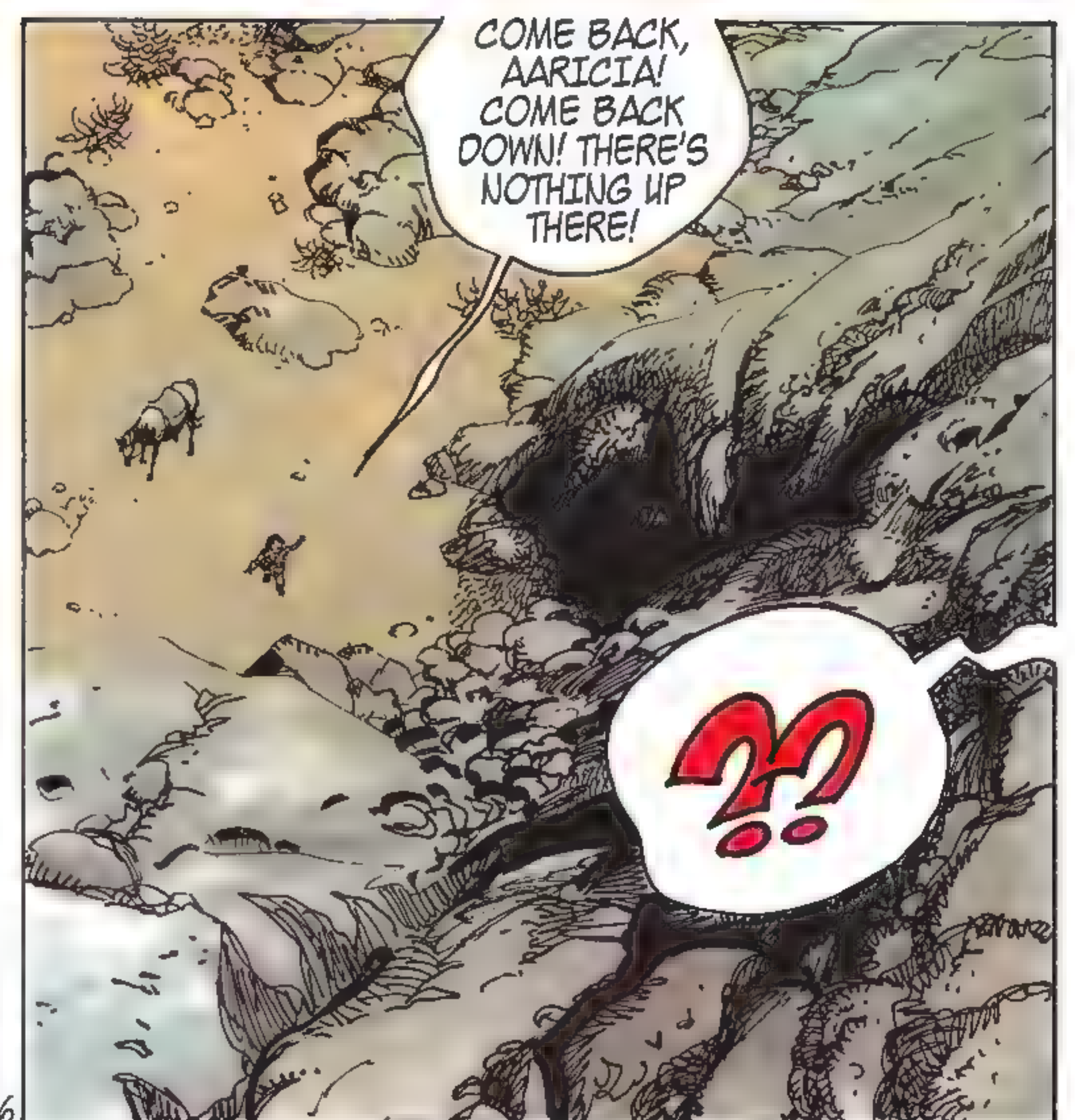
FOREVER
HAPPY!
HAHAHA!

HAHA!
GOOD LUCK
AND FAREWELL,
AARICIA!

FAREWELL,
KIND ELVES!
FAREWELL AND
THANK YOU!



AARICIAAAA!...



COME BACK,
AARICIA!
COME BACK
DOWN! THERE'S
NOTHING UP
THERE!

??



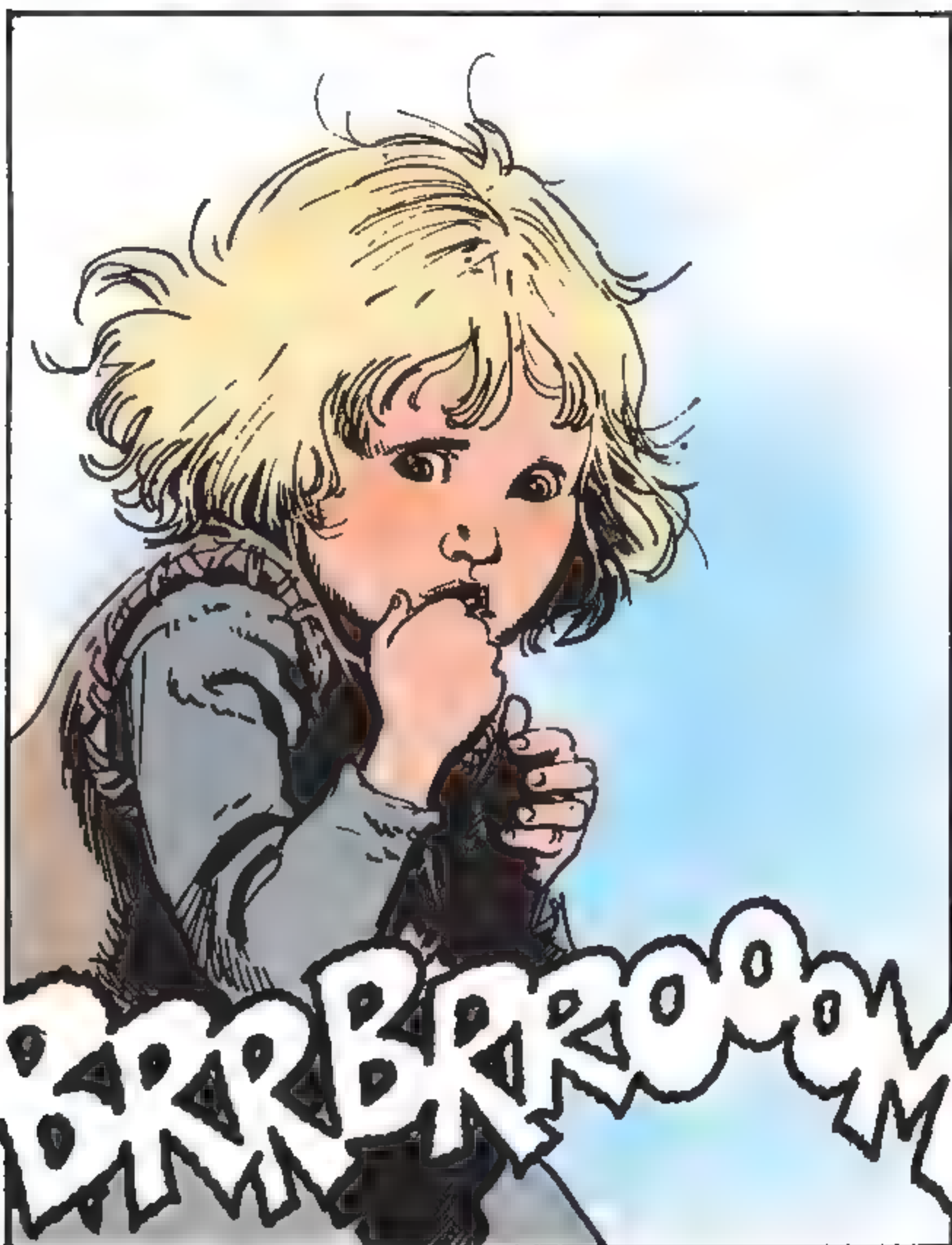
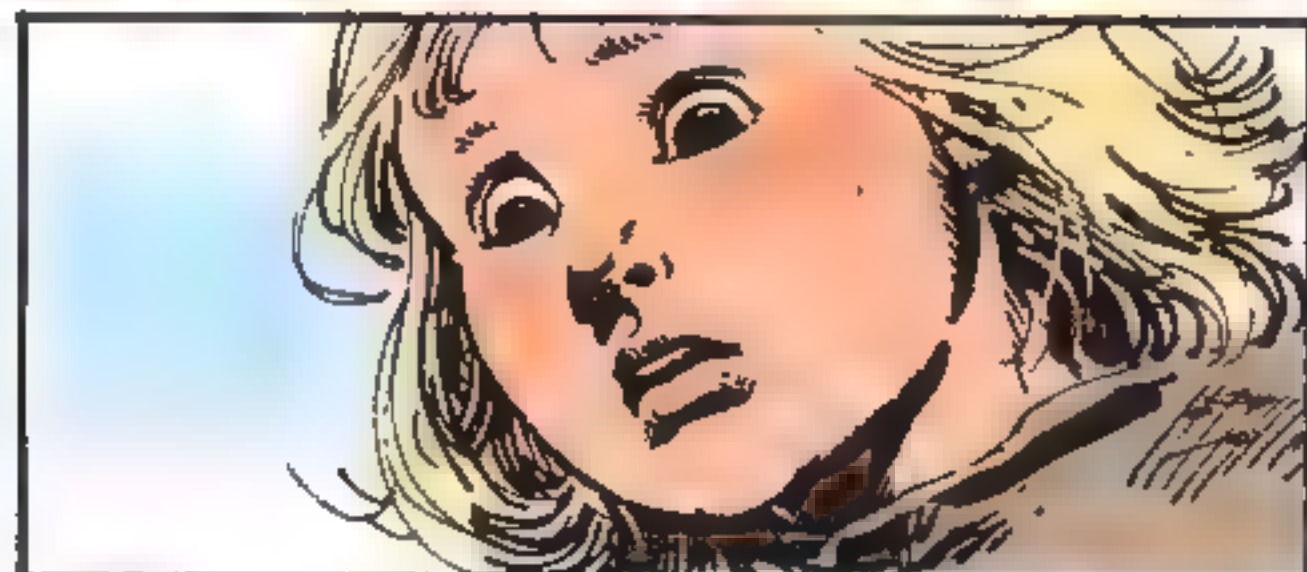
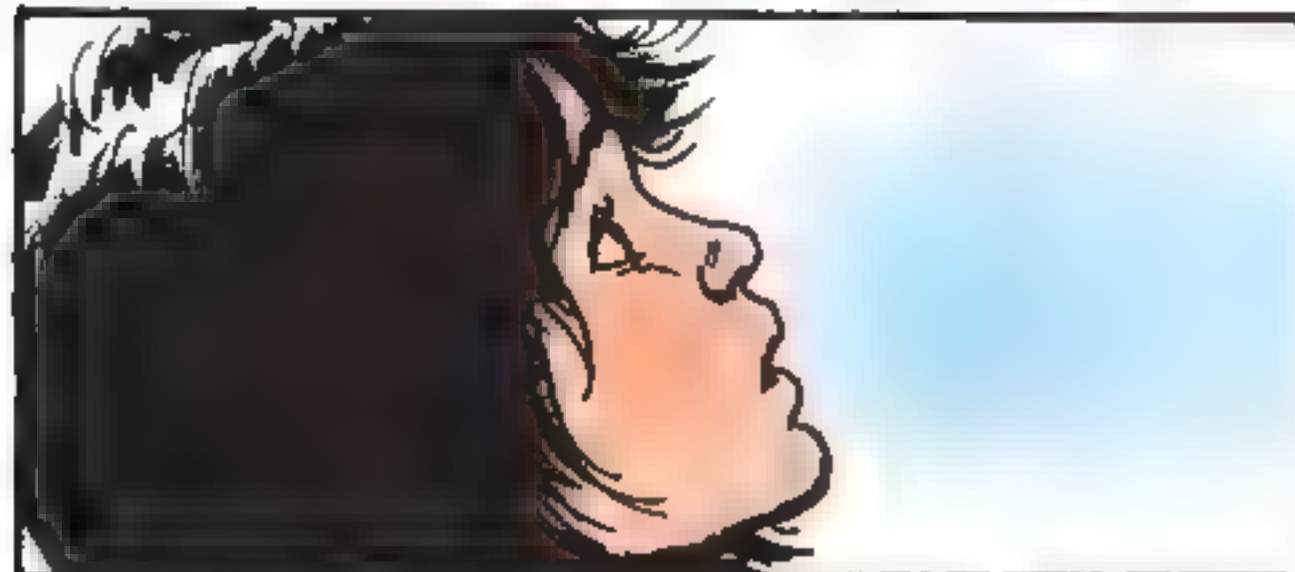
GO AWAY, THORGAL!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
I WANT TO FIND
MY MUMMY!



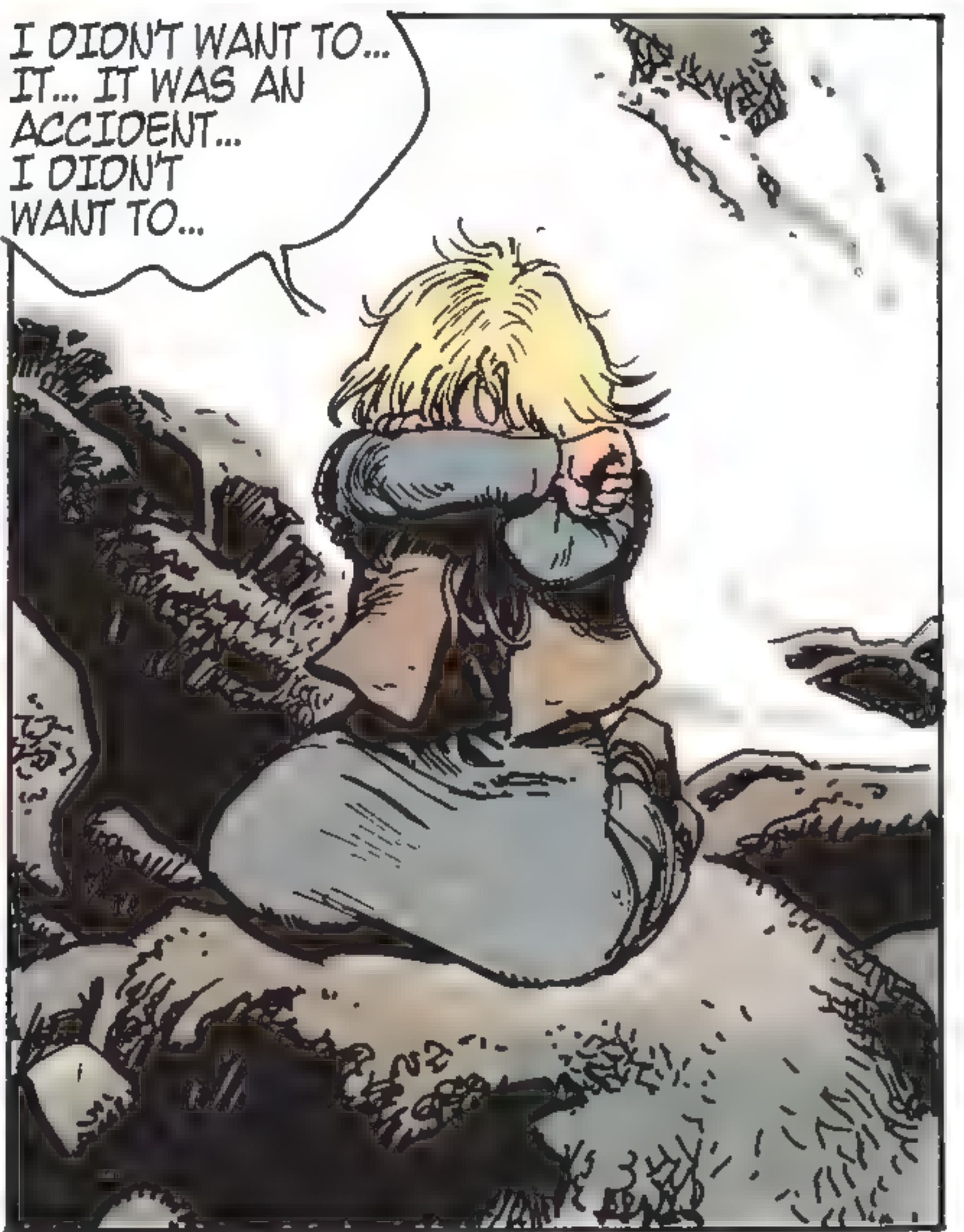
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE,
AARICIA! YOU CAN'T
FIND HER BECAUSE
YOUR MUMMY IS...



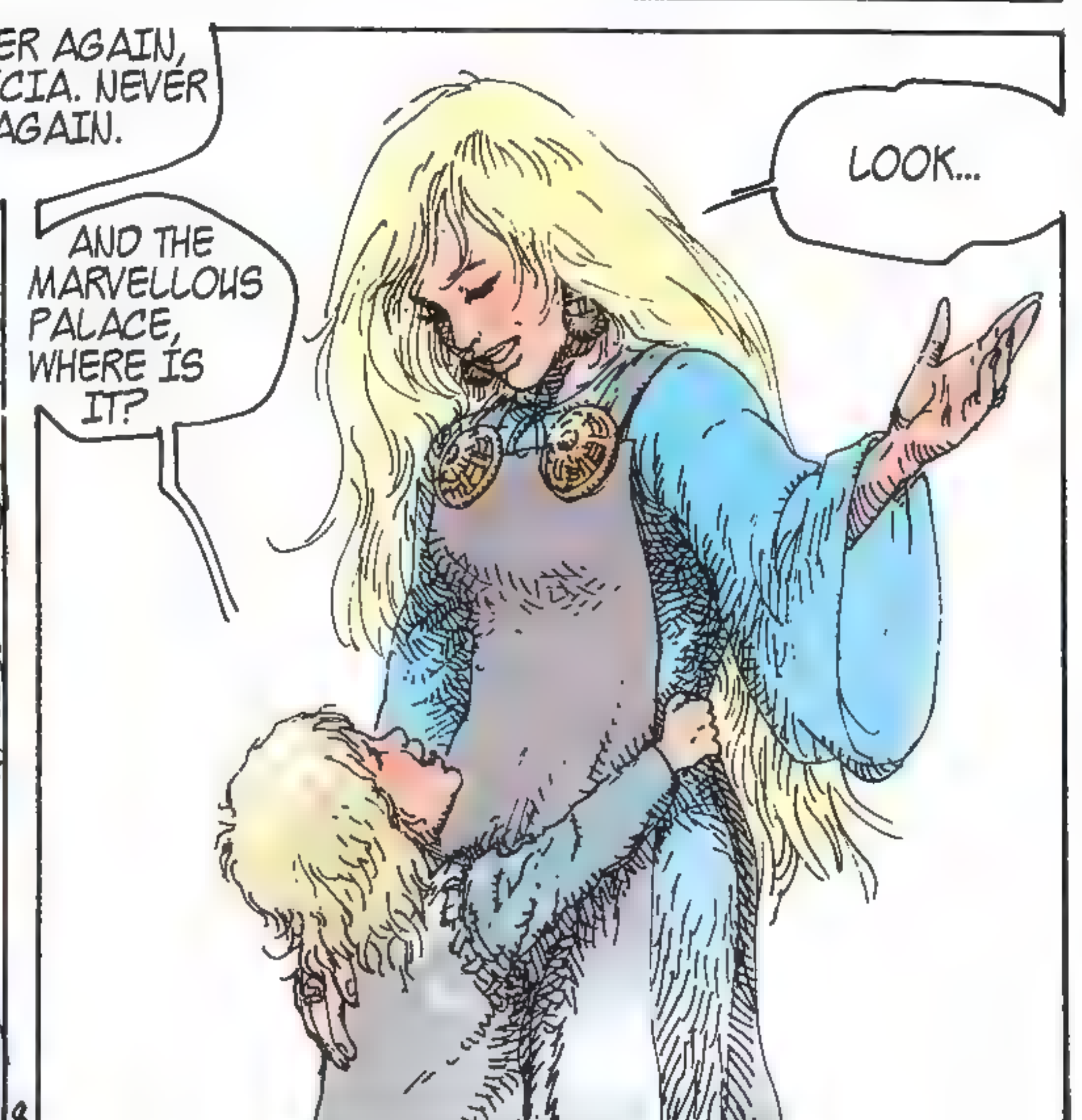
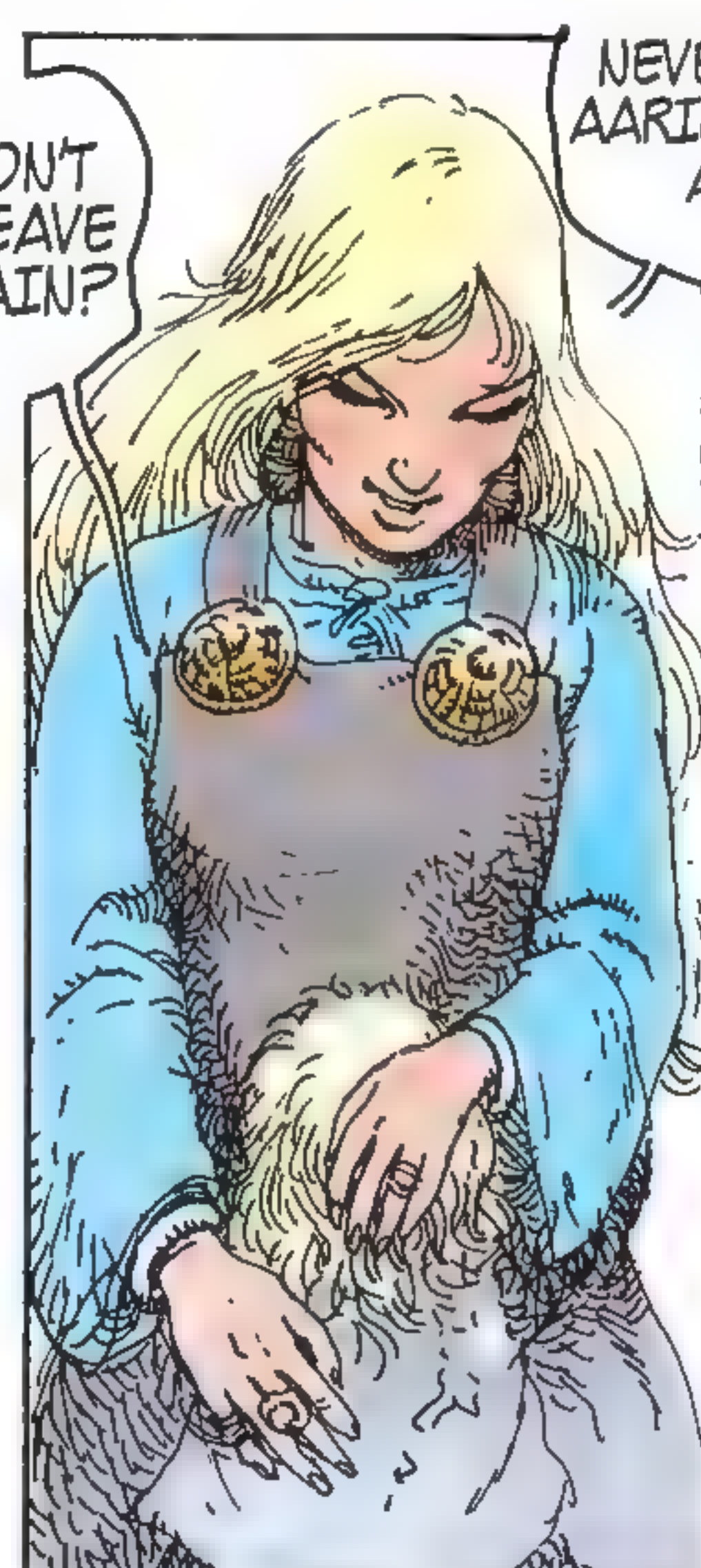
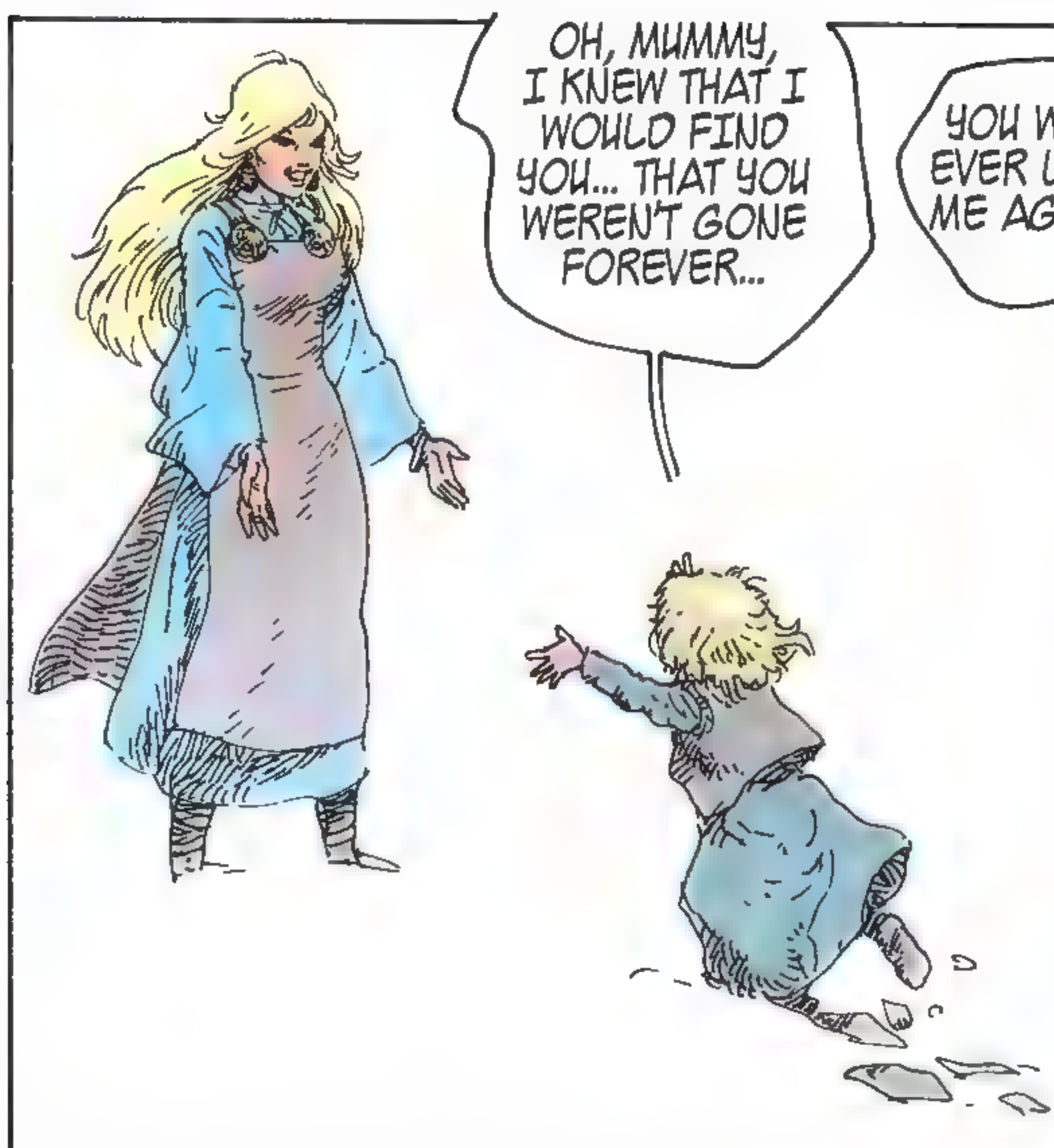
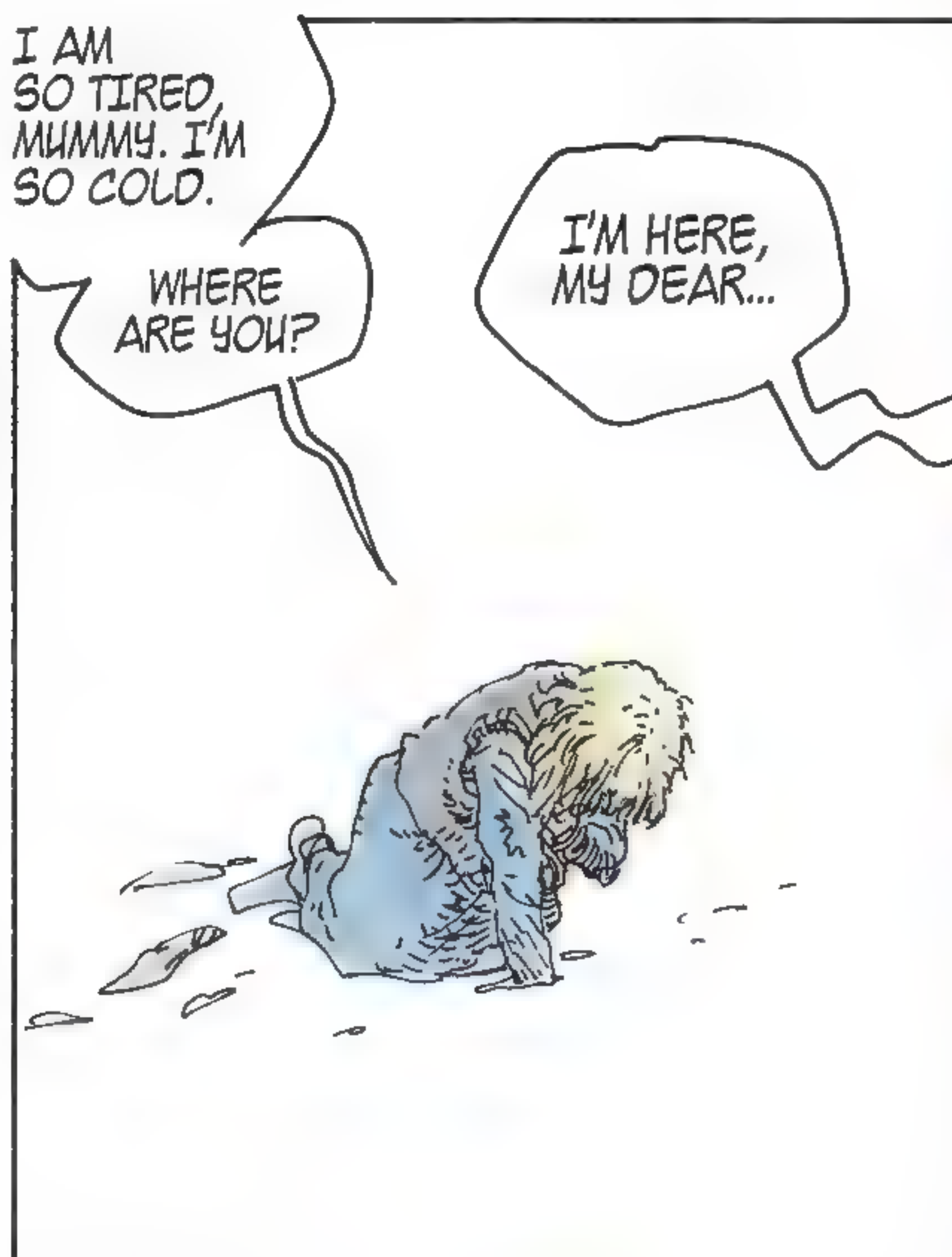
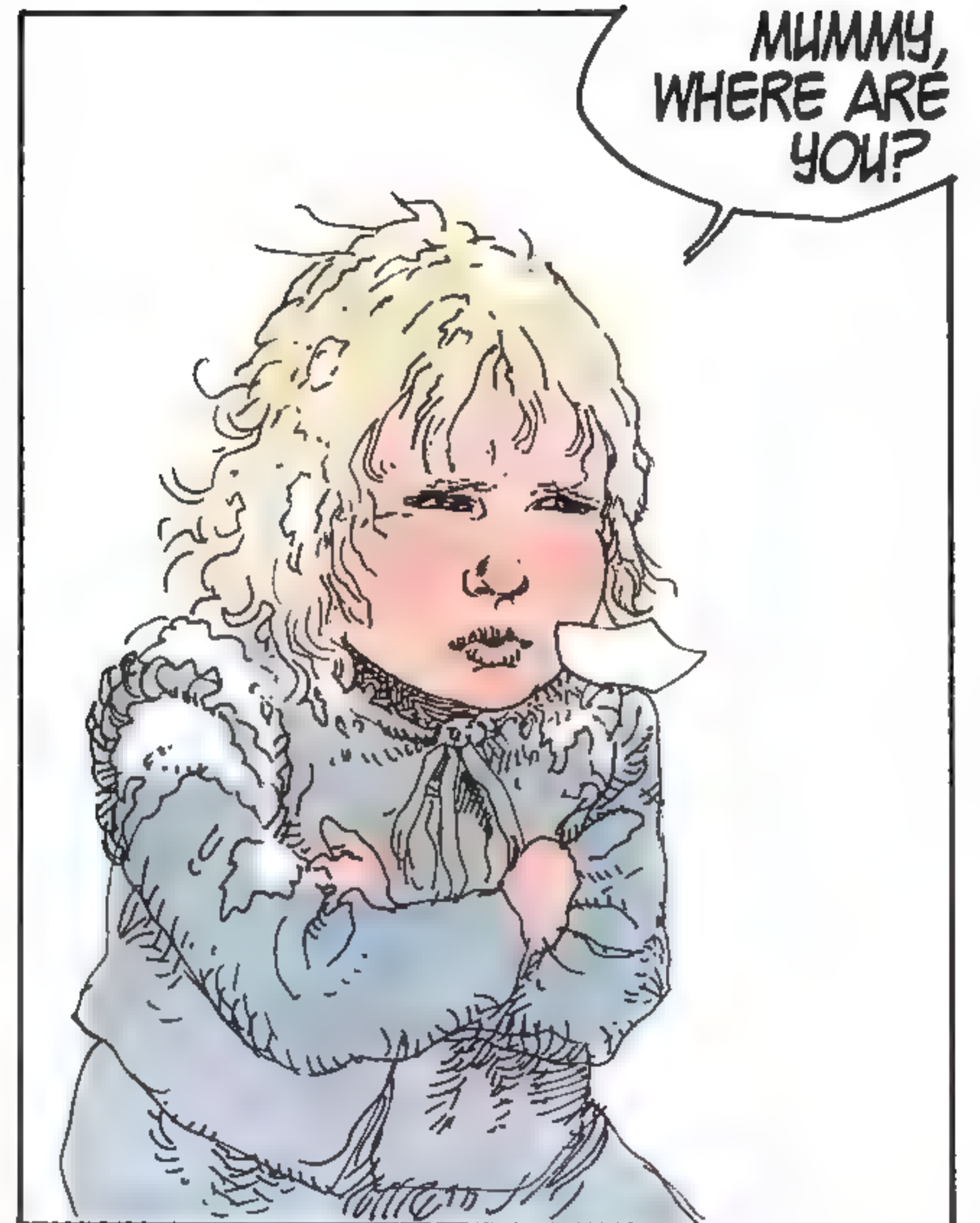
SHUT UP,
DIRTY LIAR!
SHUT UP!

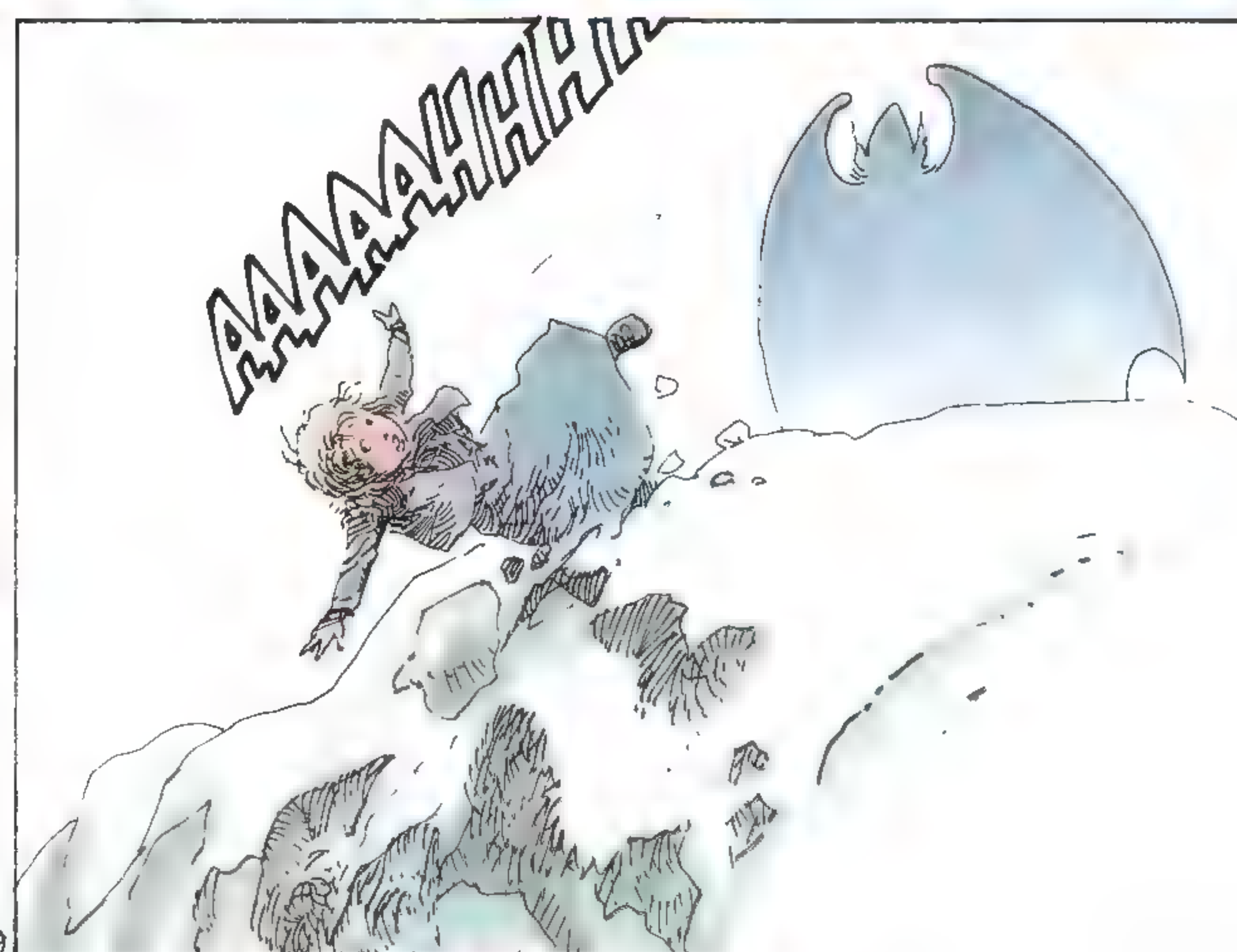
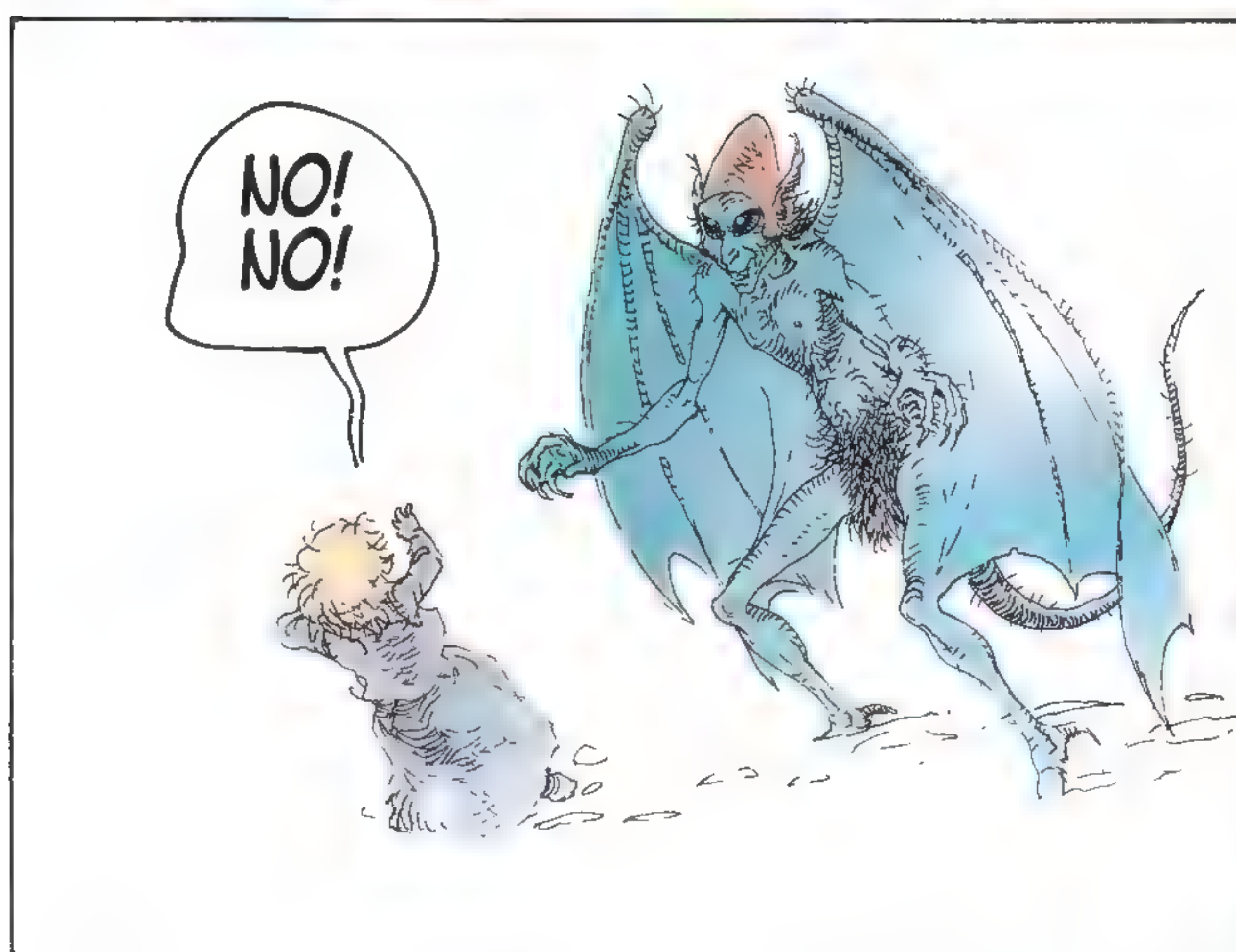
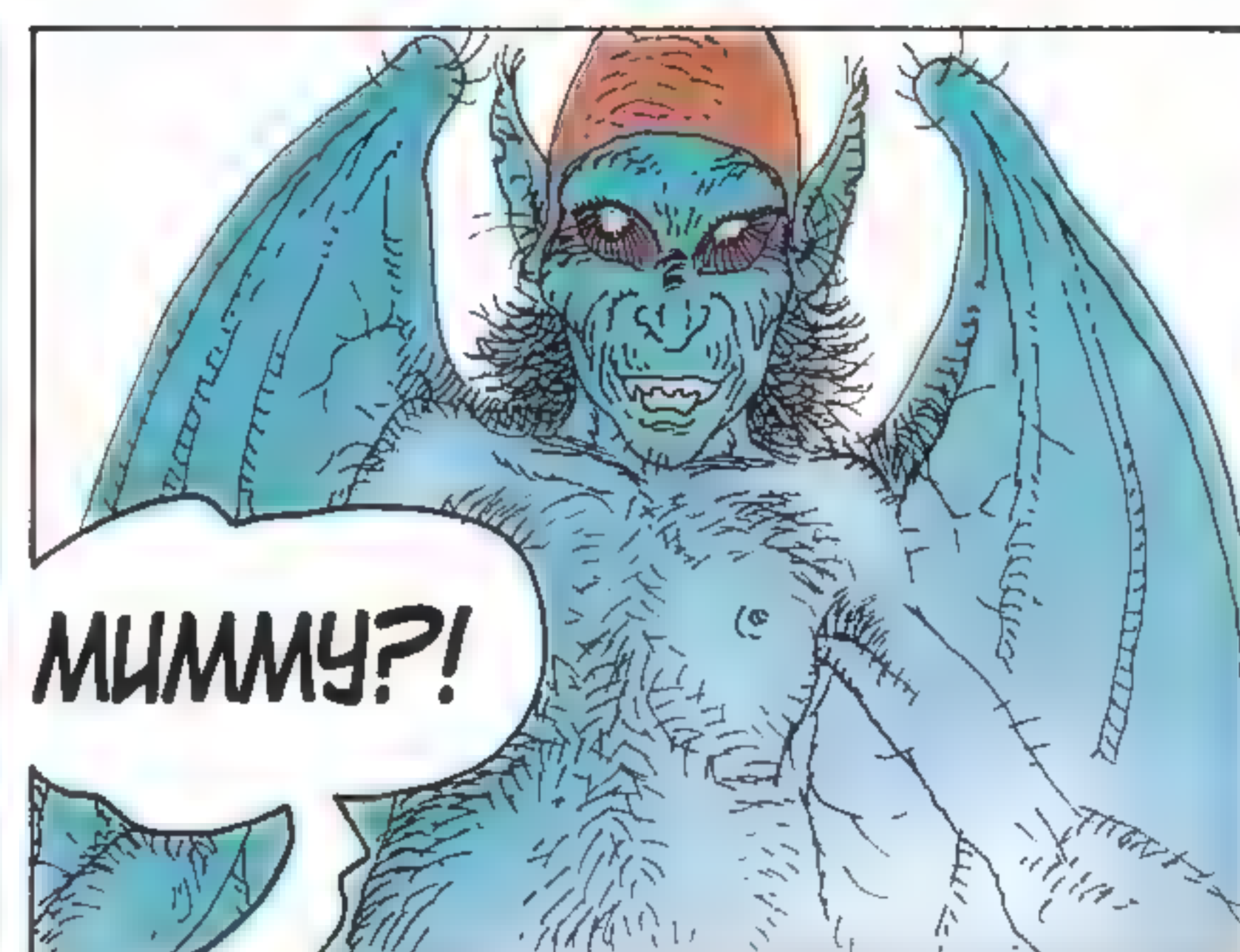
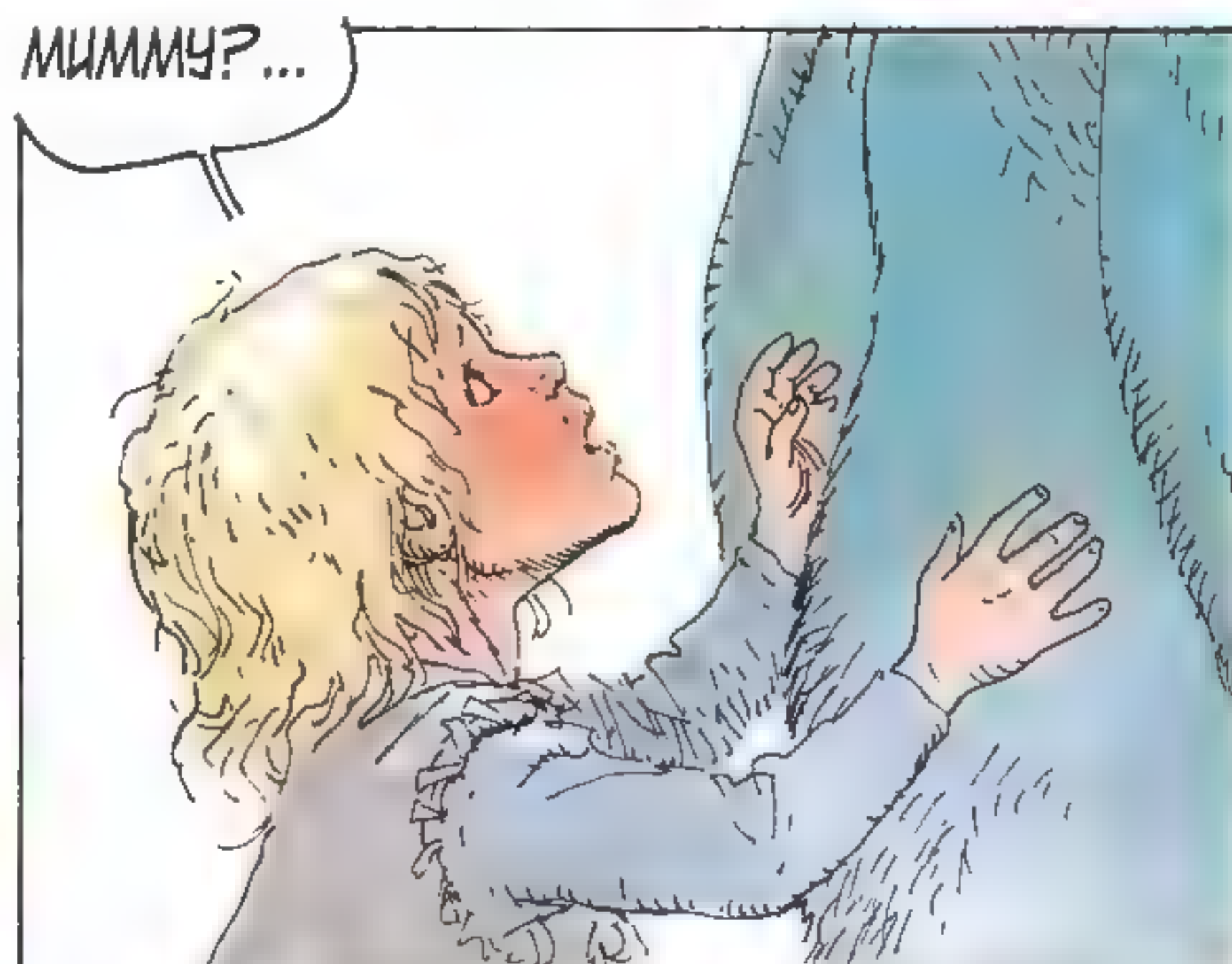
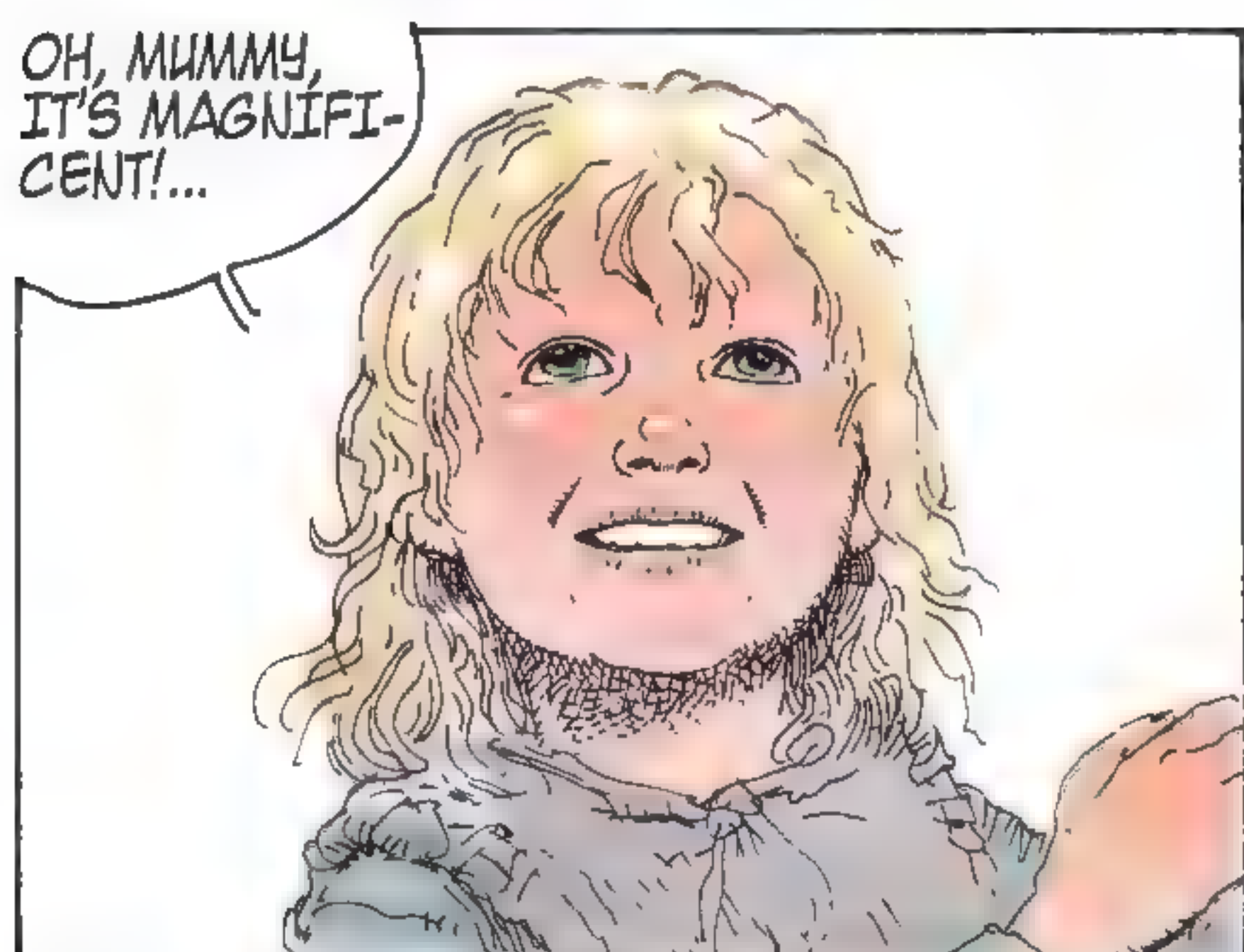


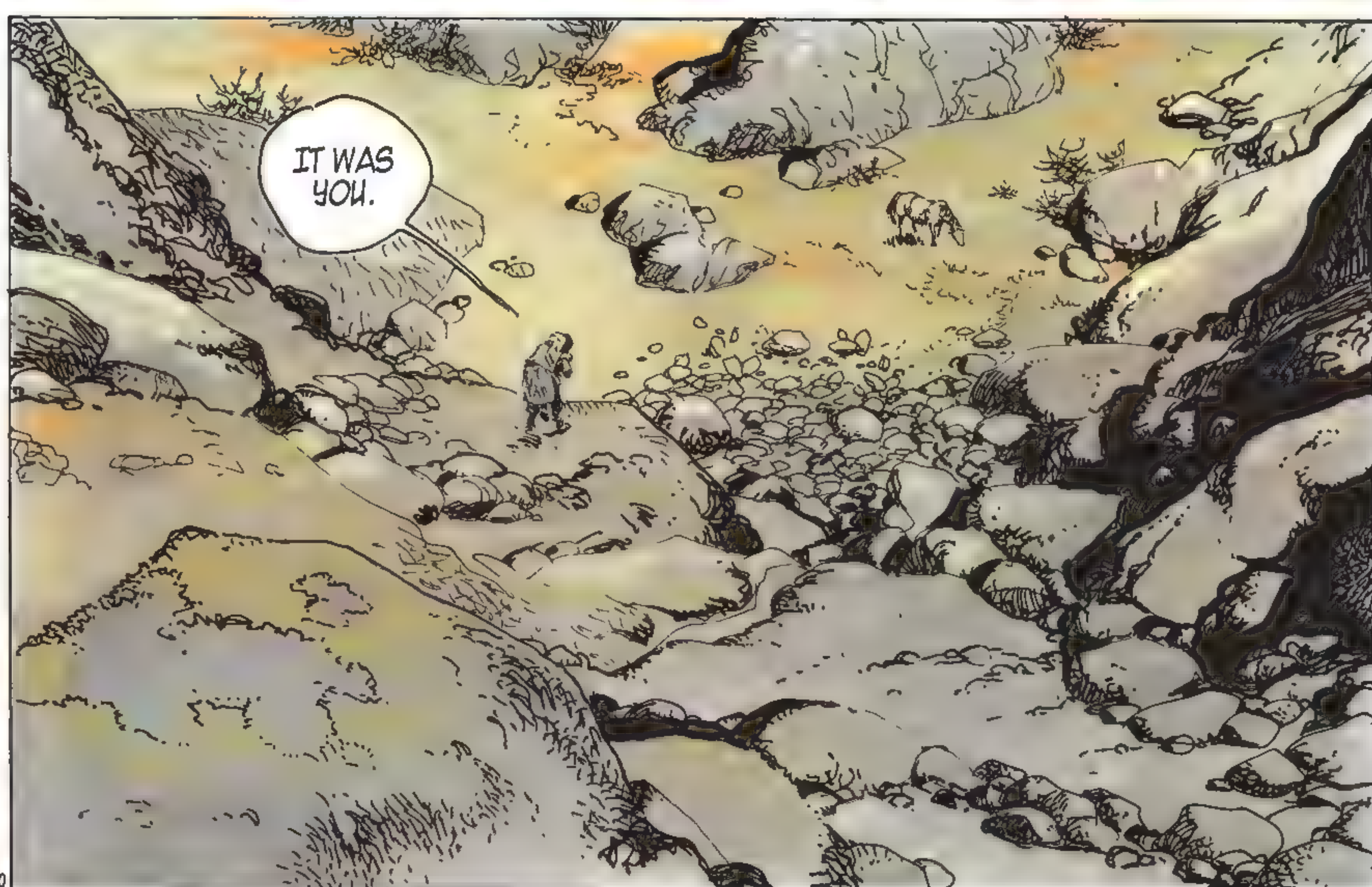
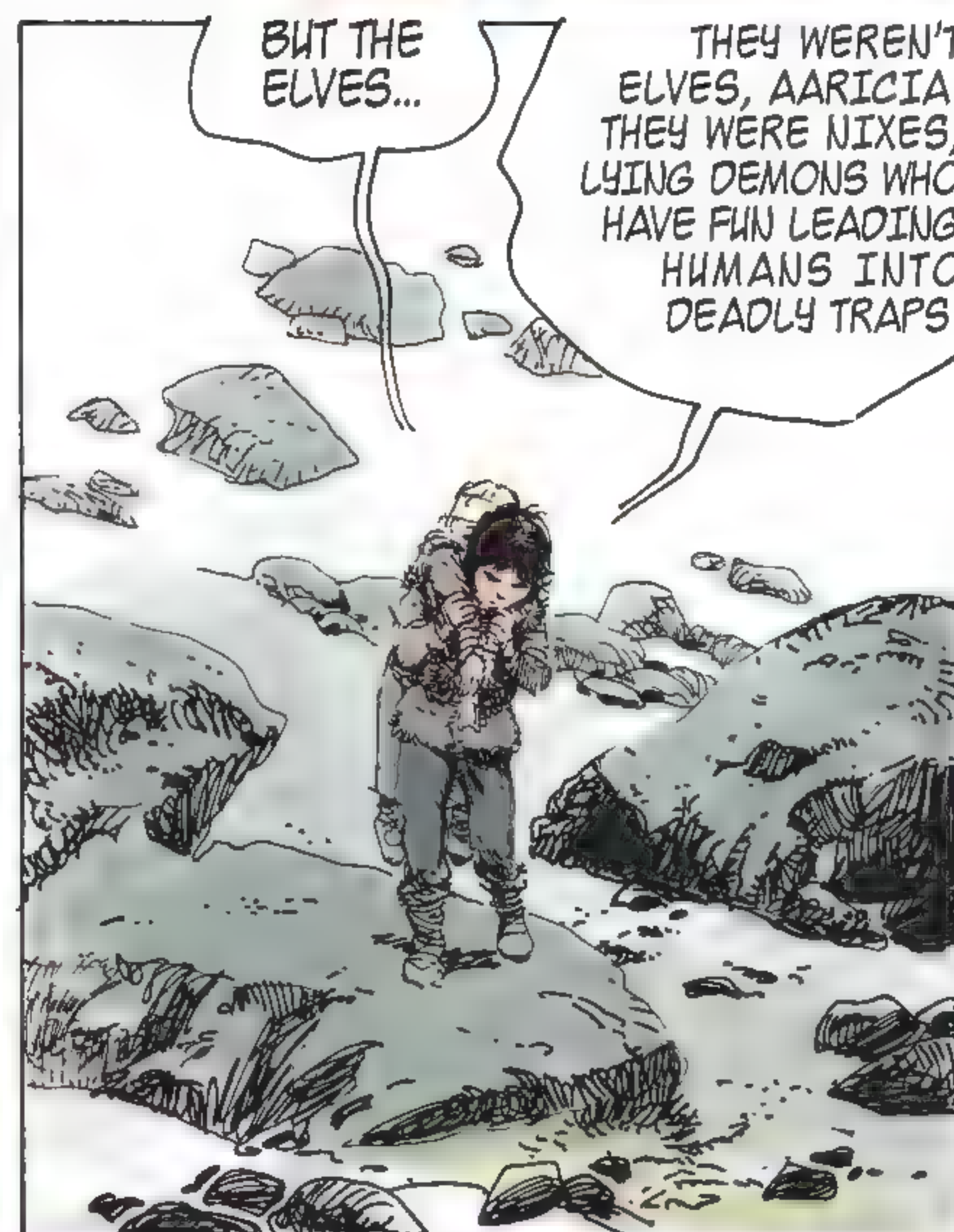
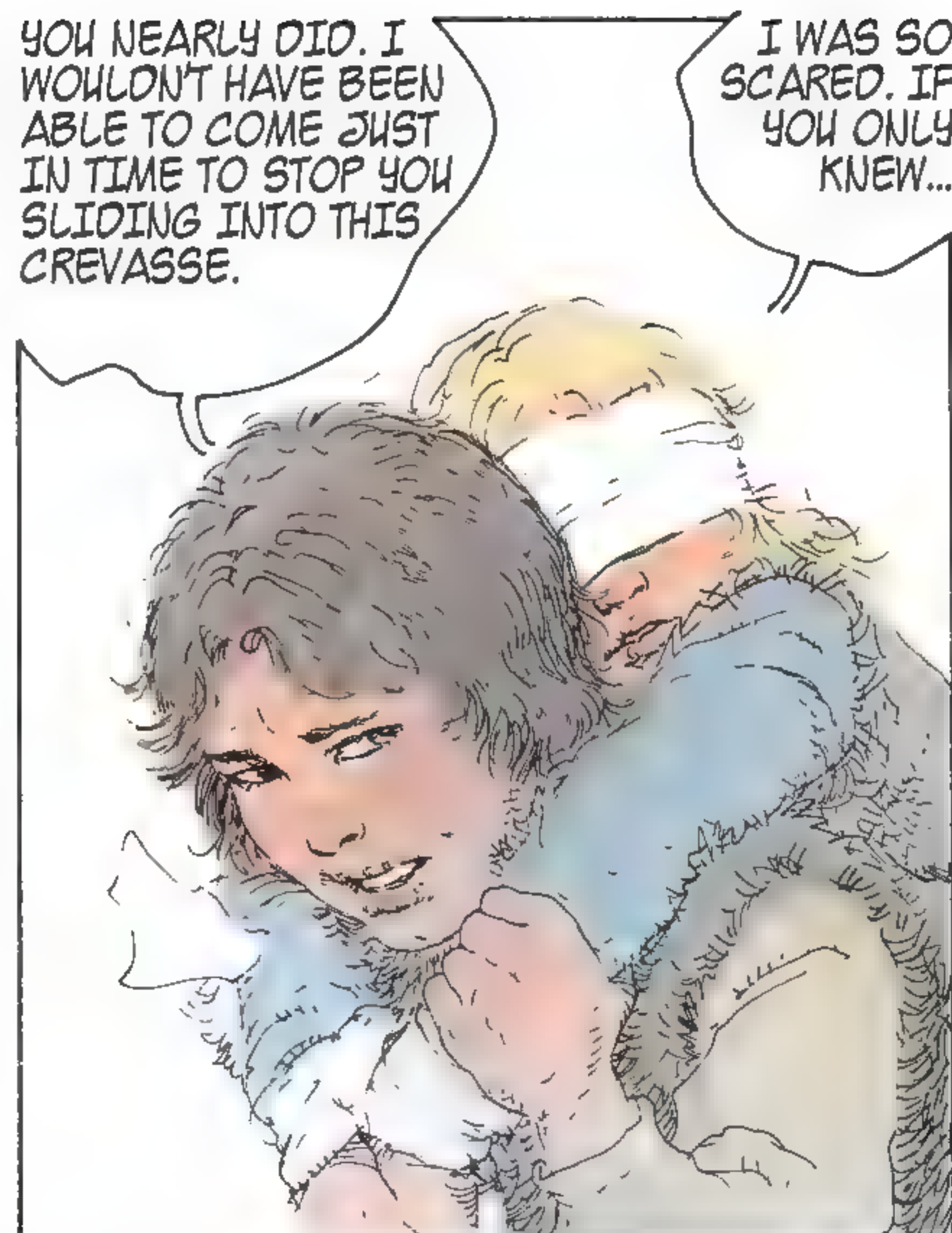
THORGAL?...
THORGAL?...



I DIDN'T WANT TO...
IT... IT WAS AN
ACCIDENT...
I DIDN'T
WANT TO...







10
D. MULL & VAN HAMME 84

FIRST SNOW

THE GREAT LEIF HARALDSON, LEADER OF THE NORTHERN VIKINGS, SON AND GRANDSON OF A LEADER, MASTER OF THE WINDS AND SEAS, WARRIOR PRINCE WITH A HUNDRED NOBLE VICTORIES, LEIF HARALDSON IS NO MORE. TO THE SHRIEKING SOUND OF BRONZE HORNS, HE TOOK TO THE SEA FOR HIS LAST CROSSING.



HIS SWORD IN HAND, LYING ON HIS BED OF FLAMES, HIS IMPERIAL STARE FIXED FOREVER ON ETERNITY. HE HAS GONE, NEVER TO RETURN, TO THE GLORIOUS BATTLES THAT AWAIT HIM IN GREAT ODIN'S VALHALLA.

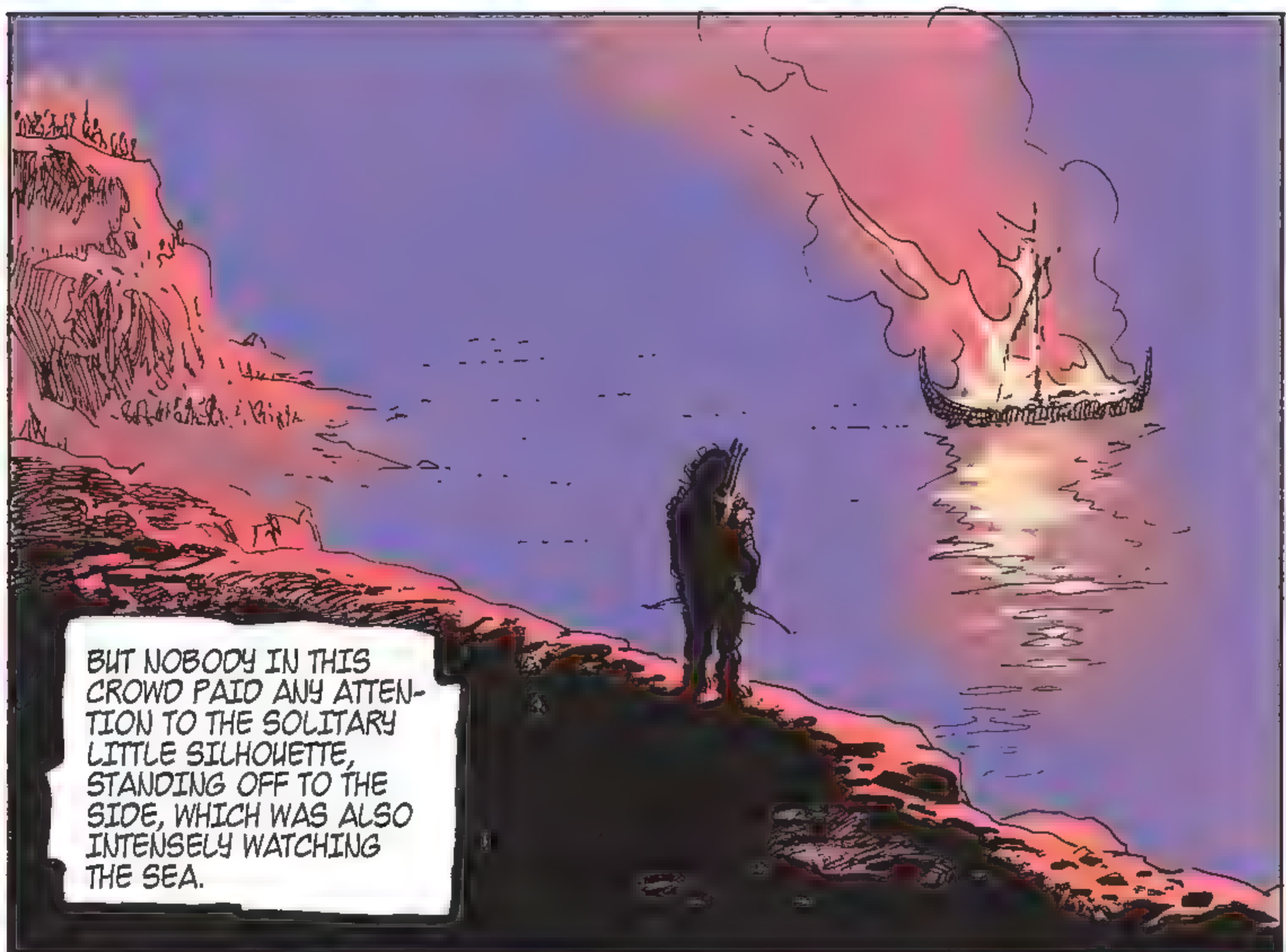




AND ALL CAME, THOSE FROM HIS CLAN, THE PROUD NORTHERN SAILORS, TO GIVE ONE FINAL SALUTE TO THE ONE WHOM THEY ALREADY MISSED. ALL THOSE PRESENT, MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, HEARTS BROKEN IN THE COLD NORTHLAND NIGHT.



THERE WAS ONLY ONE AMONGST THEM WHO FELT NO SADNESS. QUITE THE OPPOSITE, WITH GREAT EFFORT HE CONCEALED HIS JOY, FOR HE KNEW THAT NOW HIS HOUR HAD FINALLY COME.



BUT NOBODY IN THIS CROWD PAID ANY ATTENTION TO THE SOLITARY LITTLE SILHOUETTE, STANDING OFF TO THE SIDE, WHICH WAS ALSO INTENSELY WATCHING THE SEA.



NOBODY EXCEPT...

THORGAL!

AARICIA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? GO BACK TO THE OTHERS, YOU'LL GET COLD.



I... I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO BE ALONE WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING...

IS IT BECAUSE YOU ARE ASHAMED TO CRY THAT YOU AREN'T WITH THE OTHERS? IT'S NORMAL TO CRY WHEN YOU'RE SAD, YOU KNOW. YOU SHOULDN'T BE ASHAMED.



NO, IT'S NOT THAT...

WHAT IS IT, THEN? AND WHY HAVE YOU TAKEN YOUR BOW? AND THIS BAG?

I'M GOING, AARICIA. I'M LEAVING THE VILLAGE THIS VERY NIGHT.



YOU'RE... YOU'RE GOING!? WHY!?

BECAUSE TOMORROW YOUR FATHER WILL BE THE NEW LEADER OF THE NORTHERN VIKINGS AND BECAUSE HIS FIRST ACT IN POWER WILL BE TO TAKE ALL THE LANDS AND GOODS OF LEIF HARALDSON.



BUT... HE CAN'T DO THAT?! LEIF WAS YOUR FATHER AND HIS POSSESSIONS ARE YOURS NOW.

THAT'S EXACTLY MY CRIME IN THE EYES OF GANDALF-THE-MAJ. LEIF ADOPTED ME... AND I AM NOT OF THE SAME RACE. DOESN'T YOUR FATHER ALREADY OPENLY TREAT ME AS A BASTARD?



IF I STAY, HE'LL MAKE SURE I DISAPPEAR. EVERYBODY IS AFRAID OF HIM HERE AND WILL OBEY HIM OR CLOSE THEIR EYES. YOU UNDERSTAND NOW WHY I HAVE TO LEAVE?

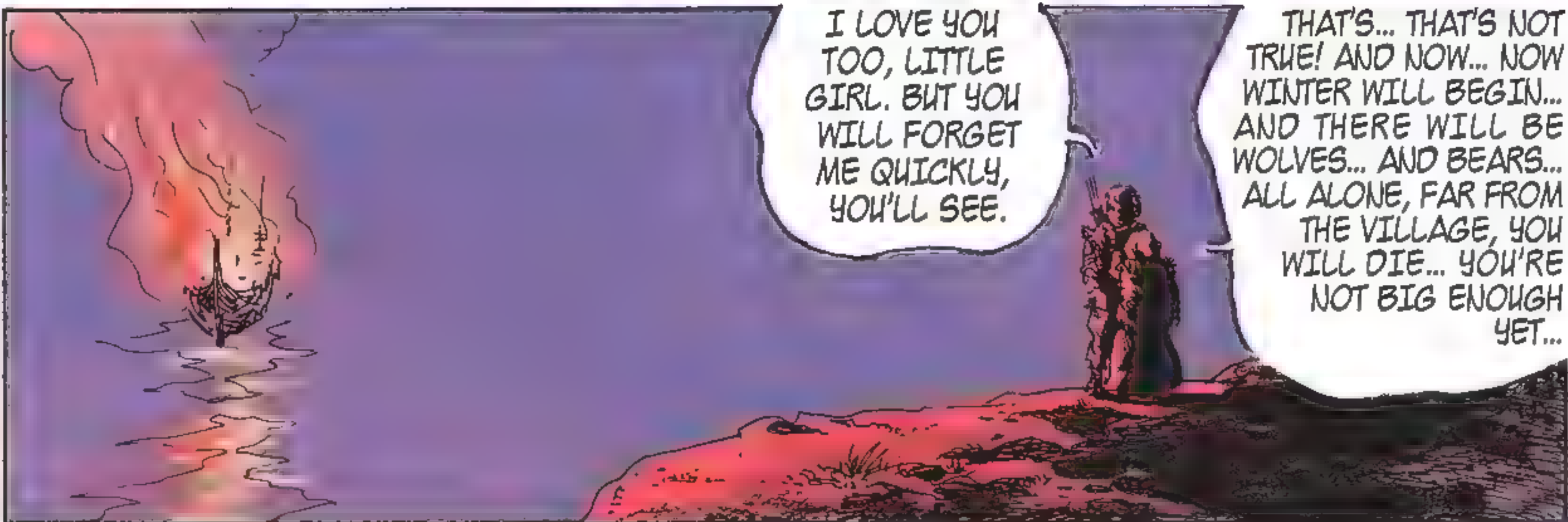


BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO GO! I... I LOVE YOU, THORGAL! I WANT YOU TO STAY. AND I WANT TO PROTECT YOU FROM GANDALF. I'LL STOP HIM FROM HURTING YOU.

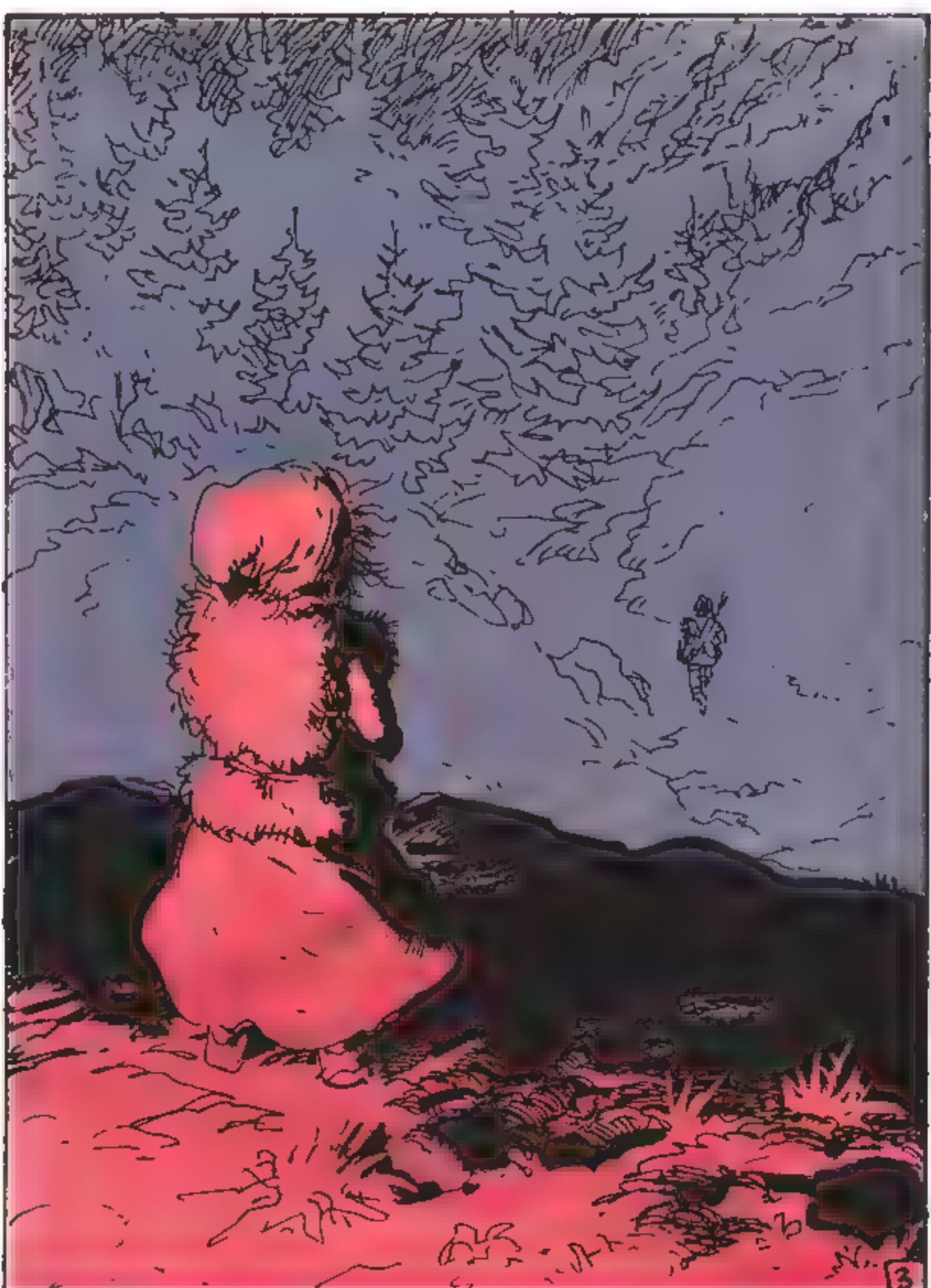
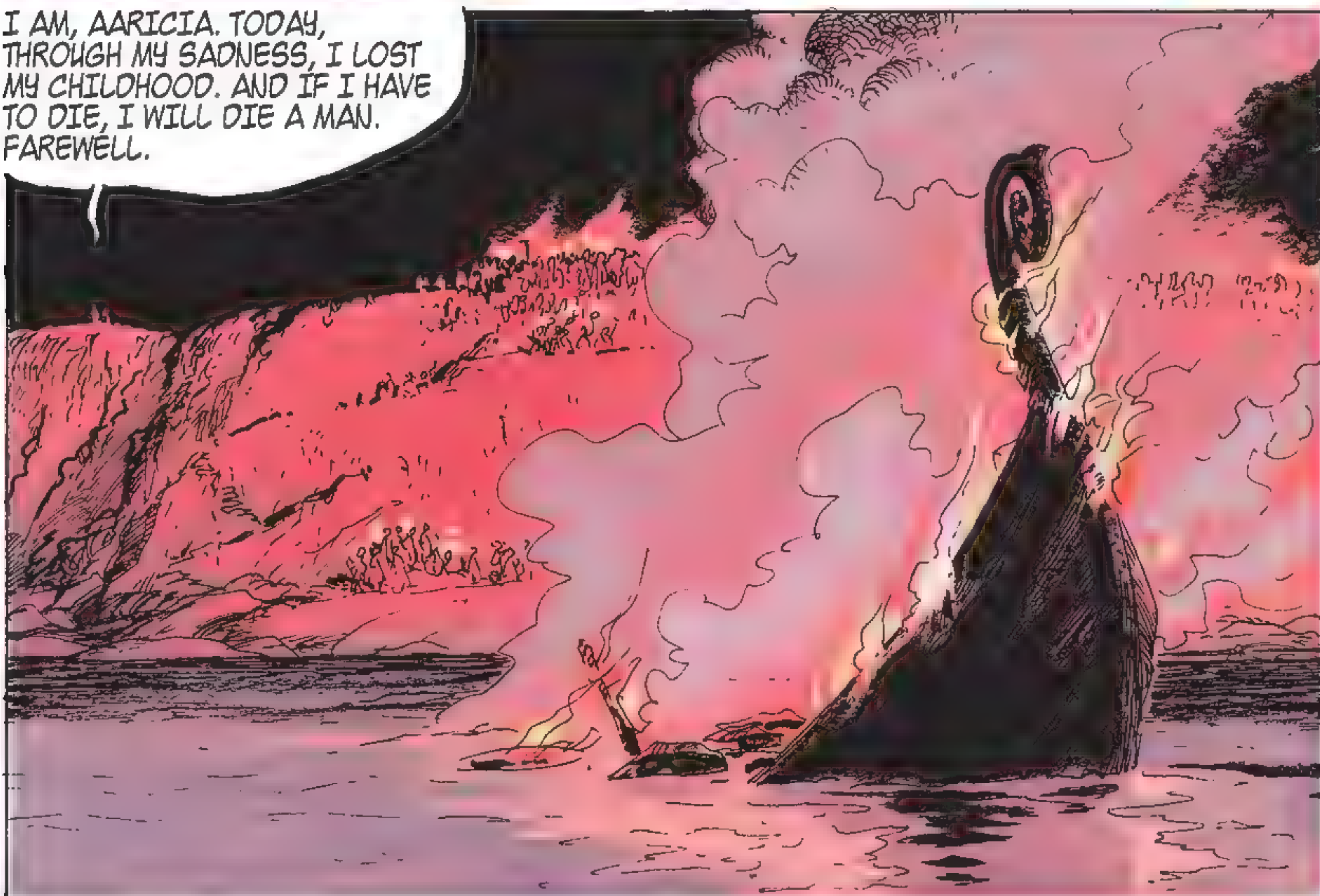


I LOVE YOU TOO, LITTLE GIRL. BUT YOU WILL FORGET ME QUICKLY, YOU'LL SEE.

THAT'S... THAT'S NOT TRUE! AND NOW... NOW WINTER WILL BEGIN... AND THERE WILL BE WOLVES... AND BEARS... ALL ALONE, FAR FROM THE VILLAGE, YOU WILL DIE... YOU'RE NOT BIG ENOUGH YET...



I AM, AARICIA. TODAY, THROUGH MY SADNESS, I LOST MY CHILDHOOD. AND IF I HAVE TO DIE, I WILL DIE A MAN. FAREWELL.



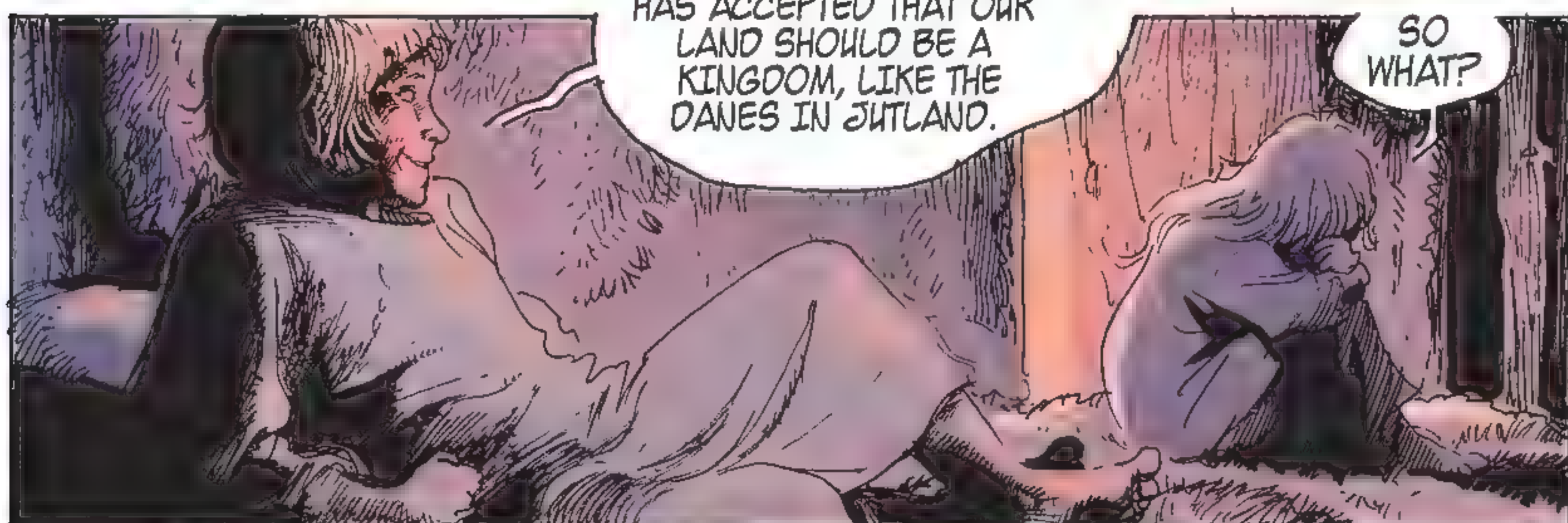


SO, YOU
DAFT THING,
WHAT ARE YOU
CRYING FOR?



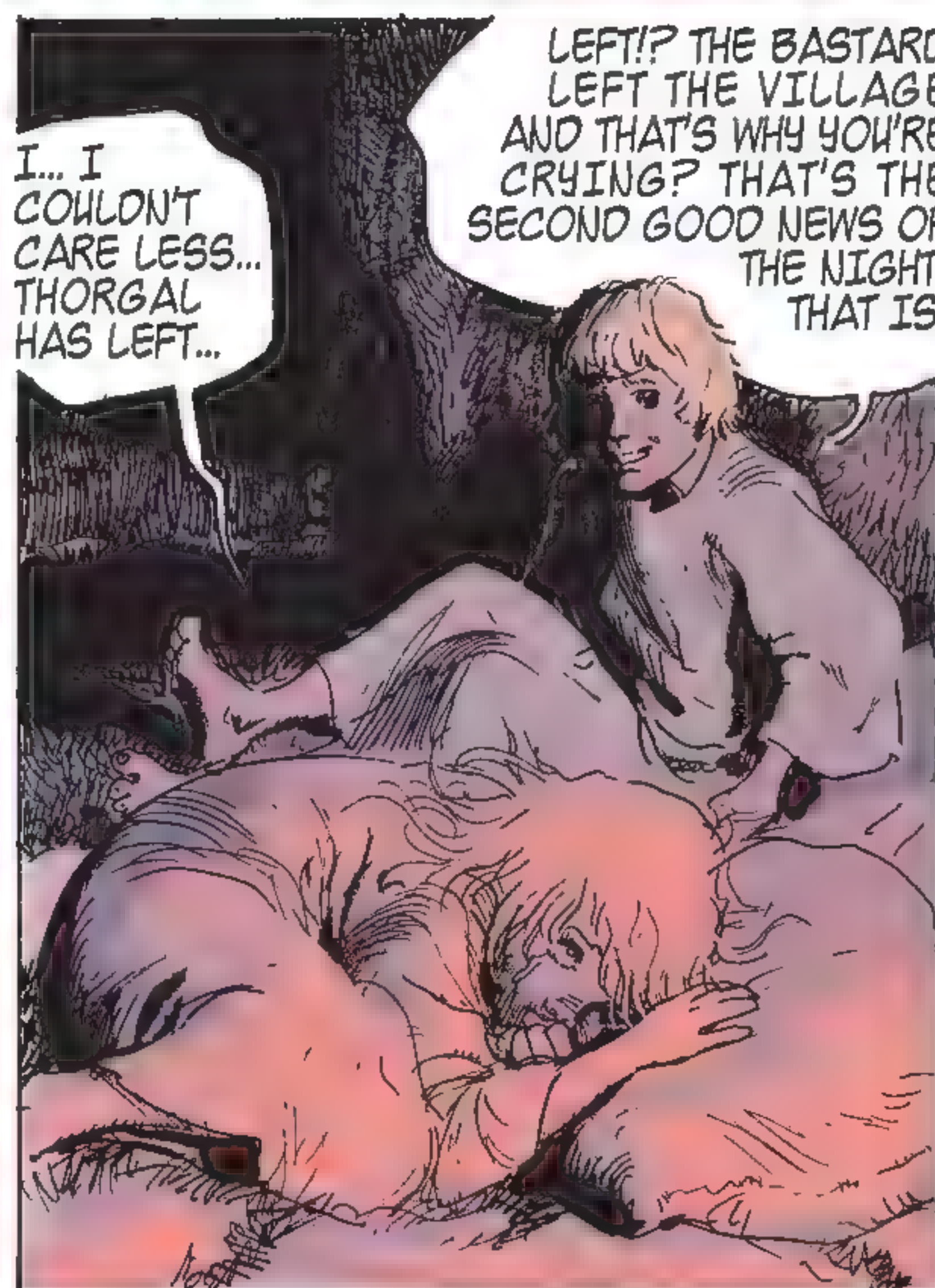
TOMORROW WILL BE A BIG DAY FOR
US, AND YOU SHOULD REJOICE, IN
FACT. OUR FATHER WILL BE THE LEADER
OF ALL NORTHLAND AND WE WILL
BECOME VERY RICH.

I...
I DON'T
CARE. LEAVE
ME ALONE,
BJORN.



AND THEN,
YOU KNOW WHAT? IT
SEEMS THAT THE ALTHING*
HAS ACCEPTED THAT OUR
LAND SHOULD BE A
KINGDOM, LIKE THE
DANES IN JUTLAND.

SO
WHAT?



I... I
COULDN'T
CARE LESS...
THORGAL
HAS LEFT...

LEFT!? THE BASTARD
LEFT THE VILLAGE
AND THAT'S WHY YOU'RE
CRYING? THAT'S THE
SECOND GOOD NEWS OF
THE NIGHT,
THAT IS!



SO WHAT? THAT MEANS
THAT GANDALF WILL BE THE
KING, YOU IDIOT! AND THAT
I WILL BE HIS HEIR AND
YOU, YOU WILL BE HIS
PRINCESS. AARICIA,
PRINCESS OF THE
NORTHERN VIKINGS
DO YOU GET IT?



WELL, I HOPE THAT IT
WILL SNOW VERY SOON
AND THAT HE WILL DIE
FROZEN, YOUR THORGAL.
OR THAT HE WILL BE
EATEN UP BY WOLVES.
GOOD NIGHT, BE-
LOVED LITTLE SIS-
TER, HAVE SWEET
NIGHTMARES,
HAHAHA!



*A SORT OF "NATIONAL" COURT OF JUSTICE, BRINGING TOGETHER THE DIFFERENT VIKING CLANS.



WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH LEIF HARALDSON'S LANDS, GANDALF?

I'LL TAKE POSSESSION OF THEM TOMORROW. I MEAN, IN THE NAME OF THE CLAN, OF COURSE.

HMMM... AND AS IT SEEMS THAT YOUNG THORGAL HAS LEFT THE VILLAGE, IT WORKS OUT WELL...



WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO INSINUATE, IVAR? THAT LITTLE BASTARD LEFT OF HIS OWN ACCORD, I DIDN'T CHASE HIM OUT. BUT SINCE HE'S GONE, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANOTHER WORD ABOUT HIM, IS THAT UNDERSTOOD!?

IN THAT CASE, YOU'LL NEVER FIND THE TREASURE.



WHAT WAS THAT? WHO SPOKE? DID I HEAR THE WORD TREASURE? WHAT TREASURE IS THIS?



THE SECRET TREASURE OF THE VIKING LEADERS THAT ONLY LEIF HARALDSON KNEW THE WHEREABOUTS OF.

BUT THORGAL TOLD ME THAT, BEFORE HE DIED, LEIF REVEALED TO HIM...

BY THE HUNDRED-THOUSAND FROZEN DEMONS OF NIFLHEL!



A TREASURE! THERE WAS TREASURE AND WE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT! WHAT ARE YOU ALL WAITING FOR? GET ON YOUR HORSES AND BRING ME THIS FILTHY BOY! I WANT HIM ALIVE, YOU HEAR ME?! **ALIVE!**

ERR... COULDN'T WE WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW?

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, WE DON'T...



I SAID NOW! AND YOU, MY LITTLE PRINCESS, COME WITH ME AND TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS TREASURE, HMMM?

YES, FATHER.





THEY'RE
BACK! THEY
FOUND HIM!



AND NOT A MINUTE
TOO SOON!... HE
ISN'T DEAD,
IS HE?

NO, BUT HE MAY AS WELL
BE. WE FOUND HIM TWO
DAYS FROM HERE,
HALF FROZEN.



AND THAT ONE
THERE, WHO'S THAT?

I DON'T KNOW,
HE WAS HEADING
NORTH AND TOLD
US THAT HE WANTED
TO ASK FOR YOUR
HOSPITALITY FOR
THE NIGHT.



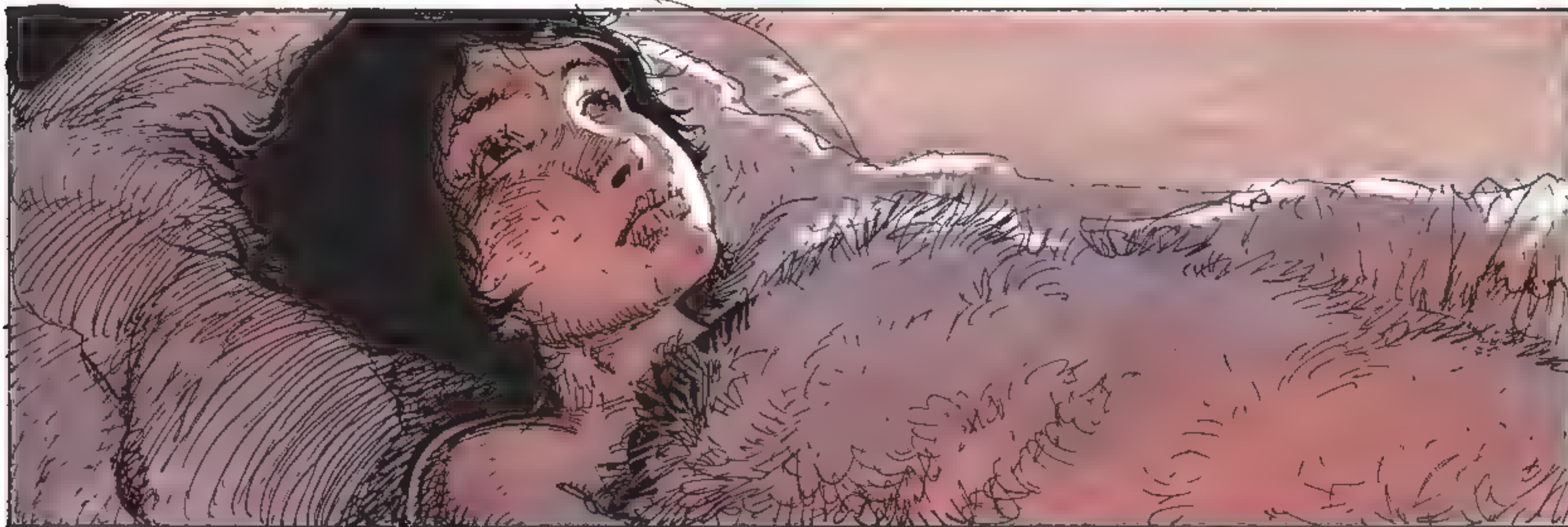
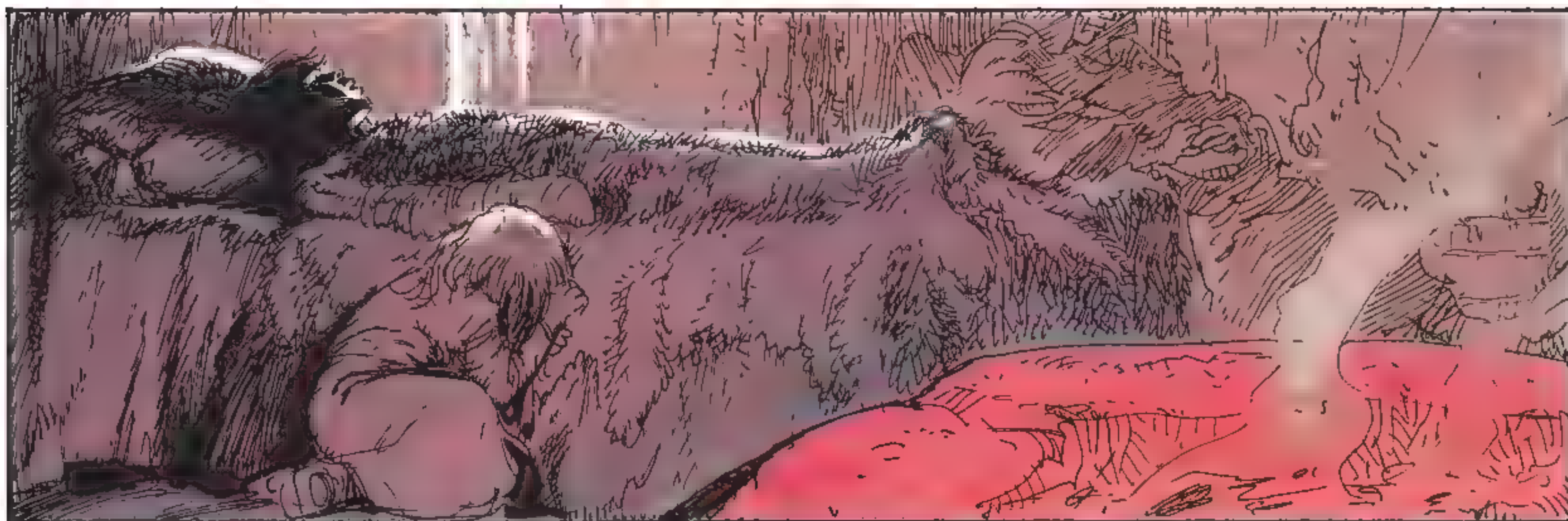
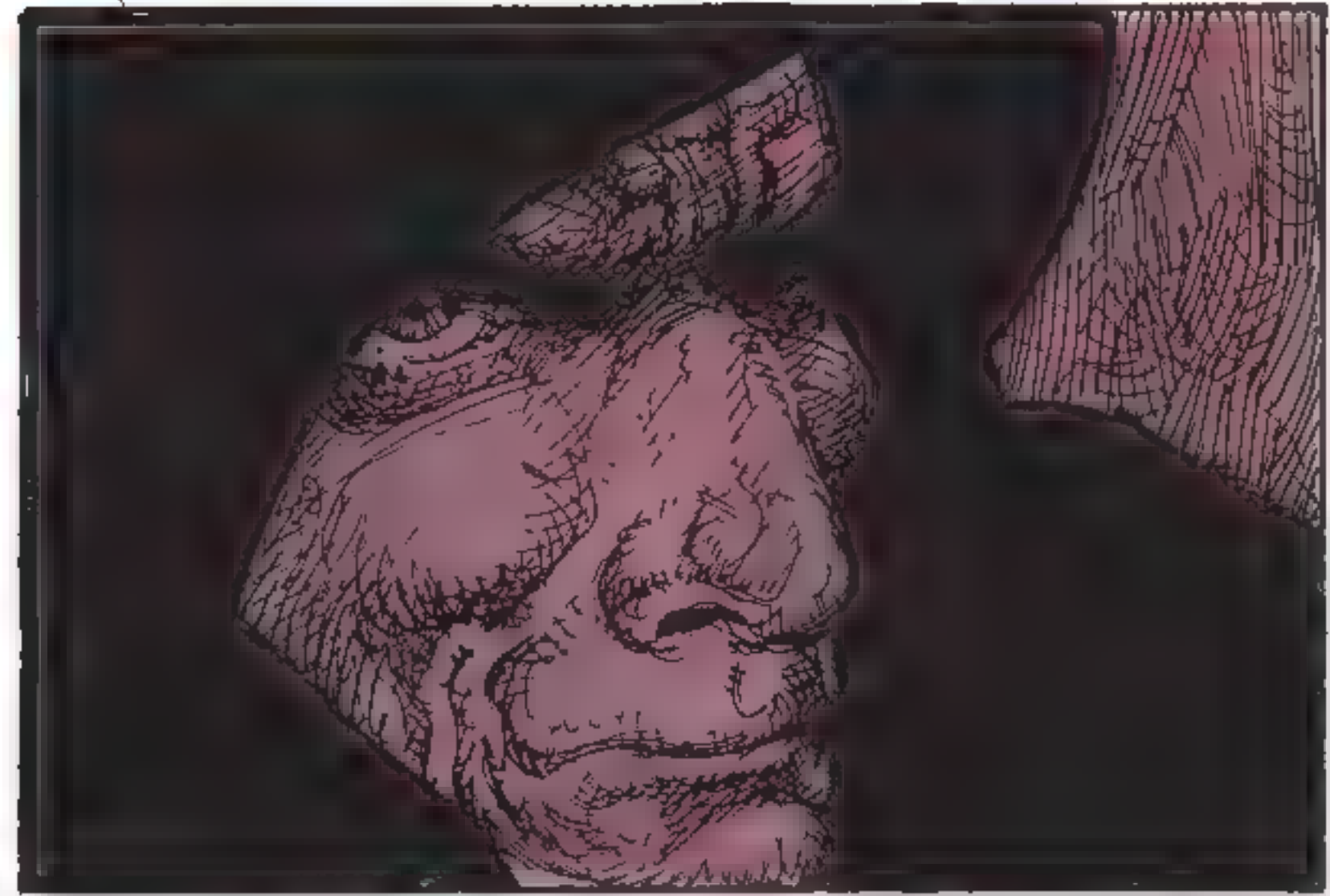
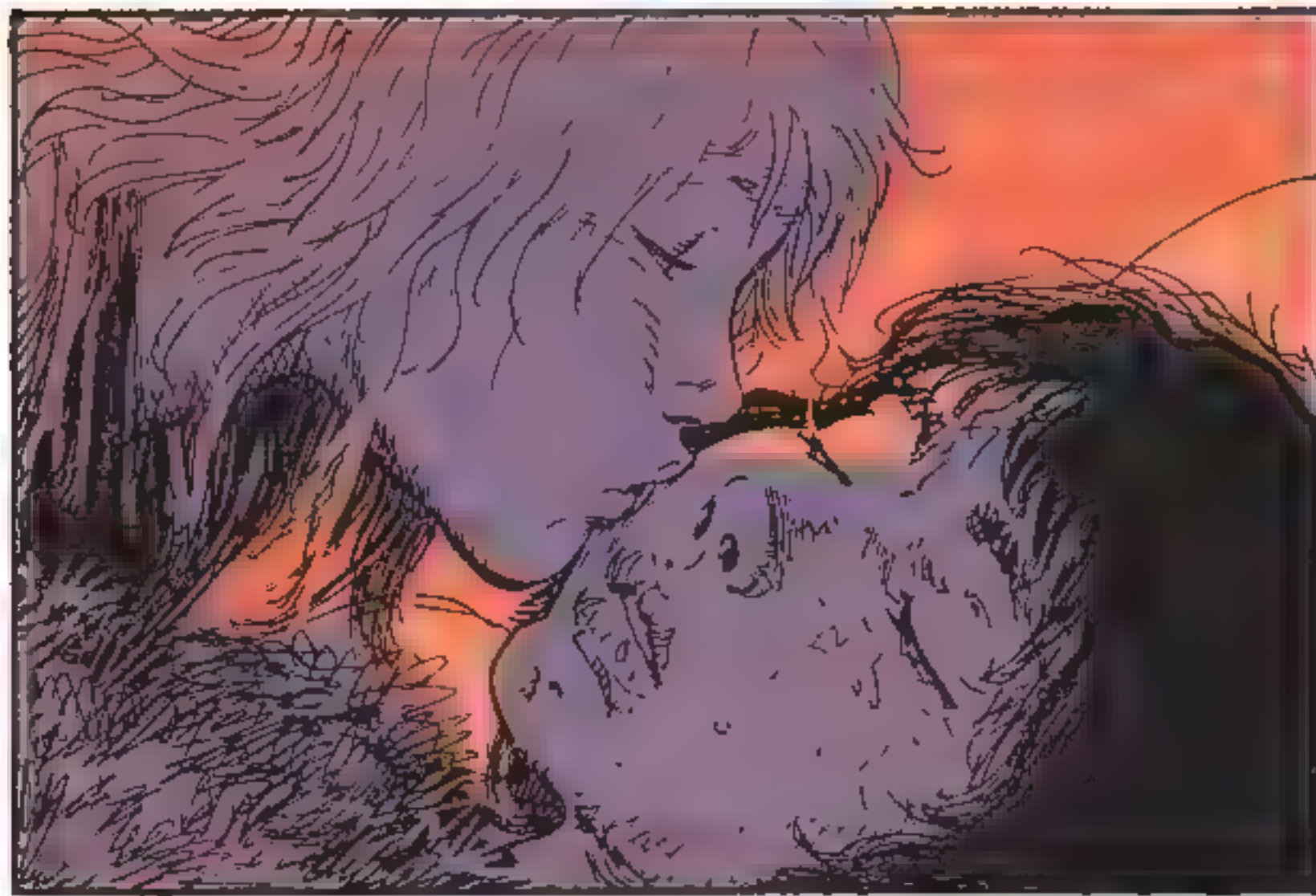
WELCOME, STRANGER,
COME IN AND WARM
YOURSELF UP. WE'LL
SPEAK LATER.

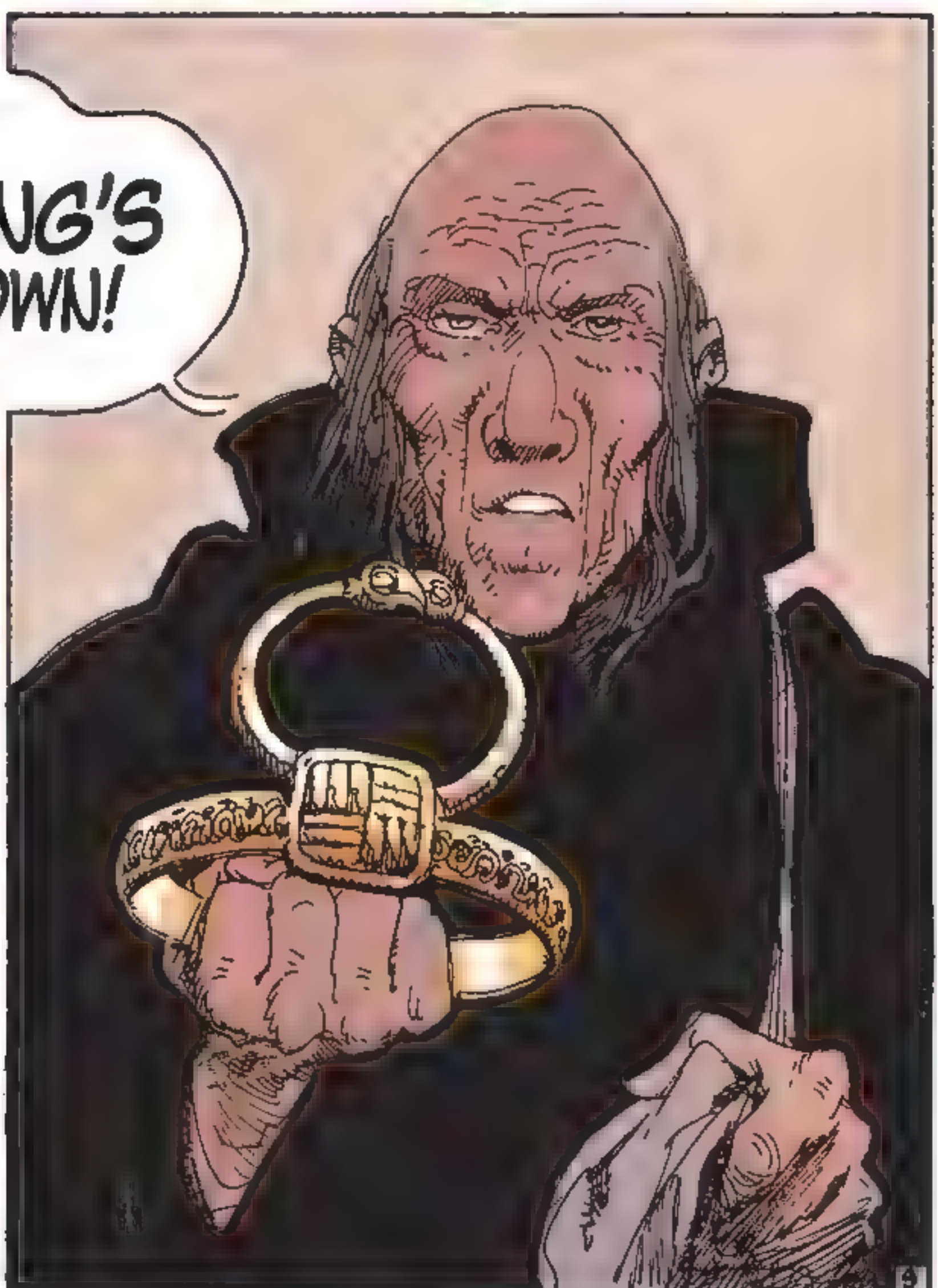
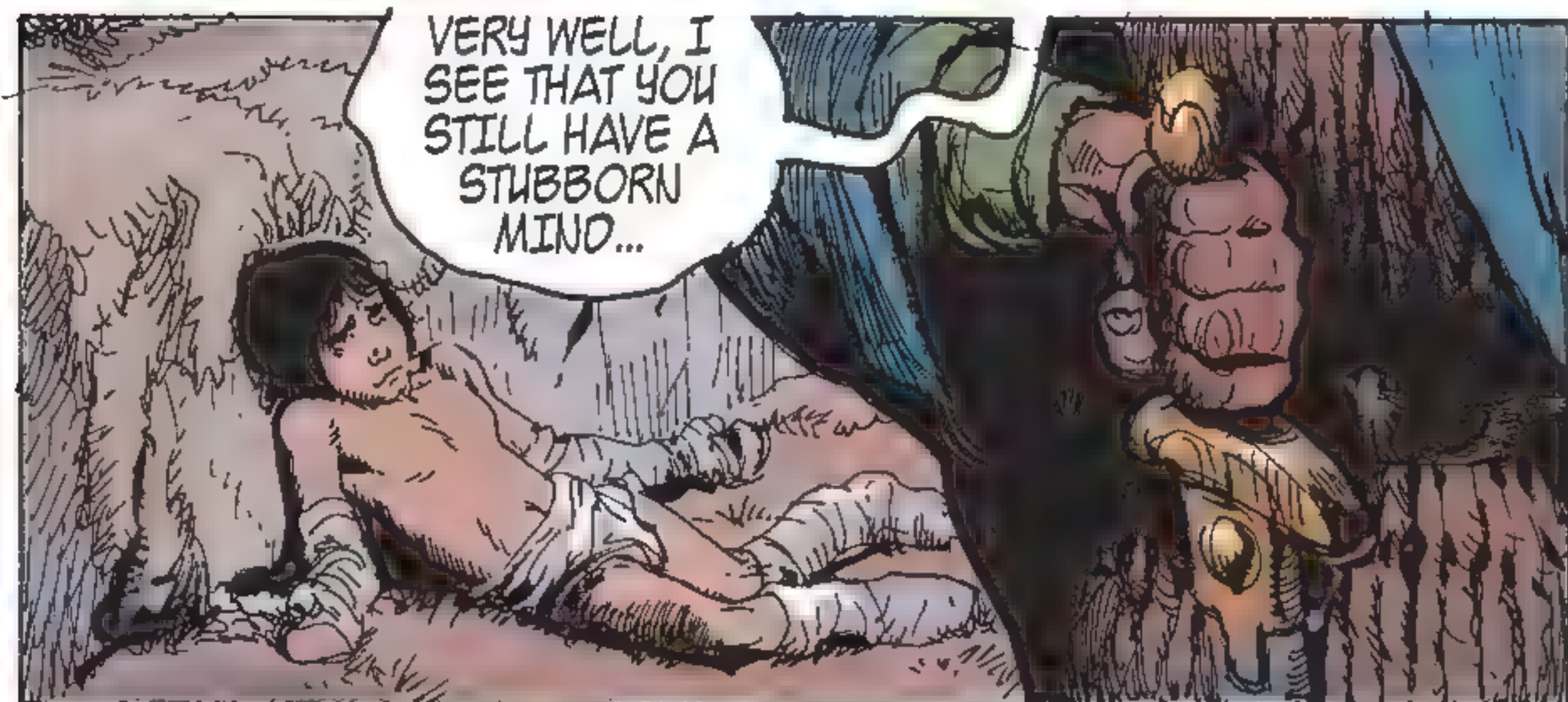
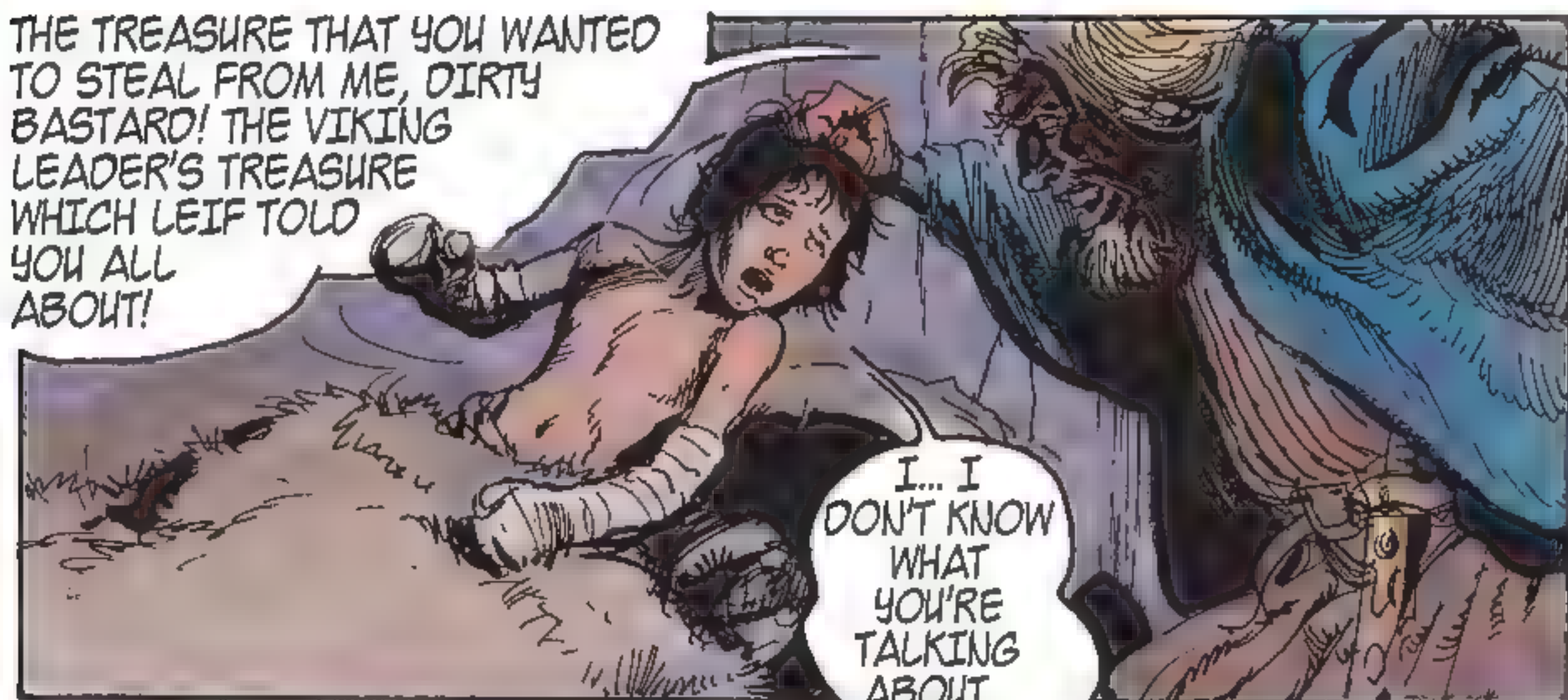
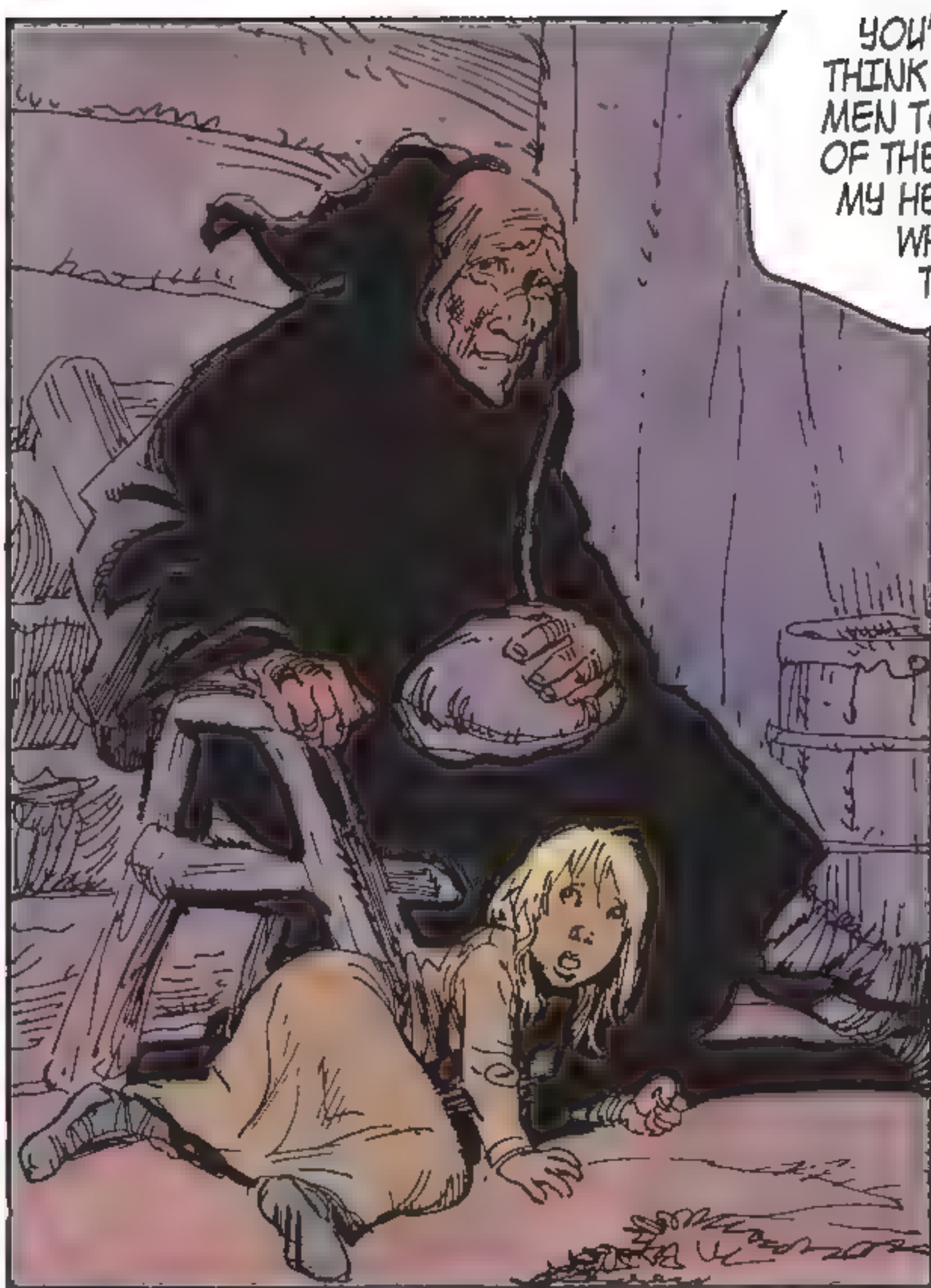
THANK YOU, NOBLE
GANDALF, BUT FOR THE
PRICE OF YOUR WELCOME,
ALLOW ME TO EXAMINE
THIS BOY. I HAVE SOME
KNOWLEDGE IN THE ART
OF HEALING.



HE HAS BEEN LUCKY
AND HE IS ROBUST. HE
WILL SOON BE BACK ON
HIS FEET. I WILL STAY
NEAR HIM FOR
TONIGHT.

COULD...
COULD I
STAY TOO?







MY NAME IS HIERULF-THE-THINKER AND I HAVE BEEN SENT BY THE ALTHING TO GIVE THIS CROWN BACK TO LEIF HARALDSON. YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED HIM, BUT I WONDER IF YOU DESERVE IT...

YOUR OPINION MEANS NOTHING TO ME, OLD MAN. GIVE ME THAT CROWN, IT'S MINE BY RIGHTS.



ONE MOMENT, I WASN'T FINISHED...



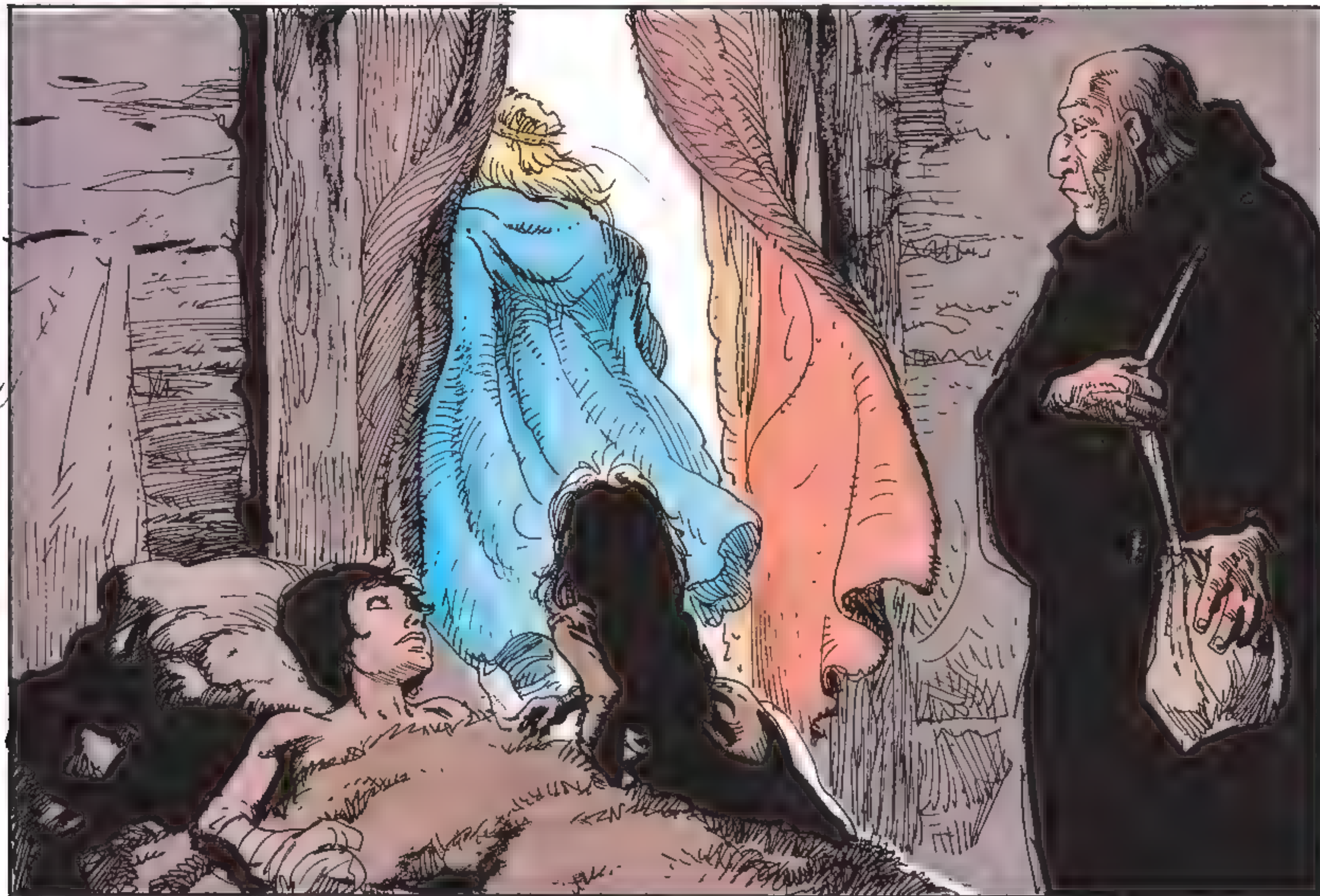
IN ORDER TO RECOGNISE YOU AS KING, THE ALTHING HAS ORDERED ME TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE SO THAT I MAY MAKE SURE THAT OUR ANCESTRAL LAWS ARE BEING RESPECTED. LAWS WHICH REQUIRE THE PROTECTION OF THE WEAK AND CHILDREN ESPECIALLY. YOUR CROWN COMES AT THIS PRICE, GANDALF-THE-MAD, DO YOU ACCEPT IT?



VERY WELL.



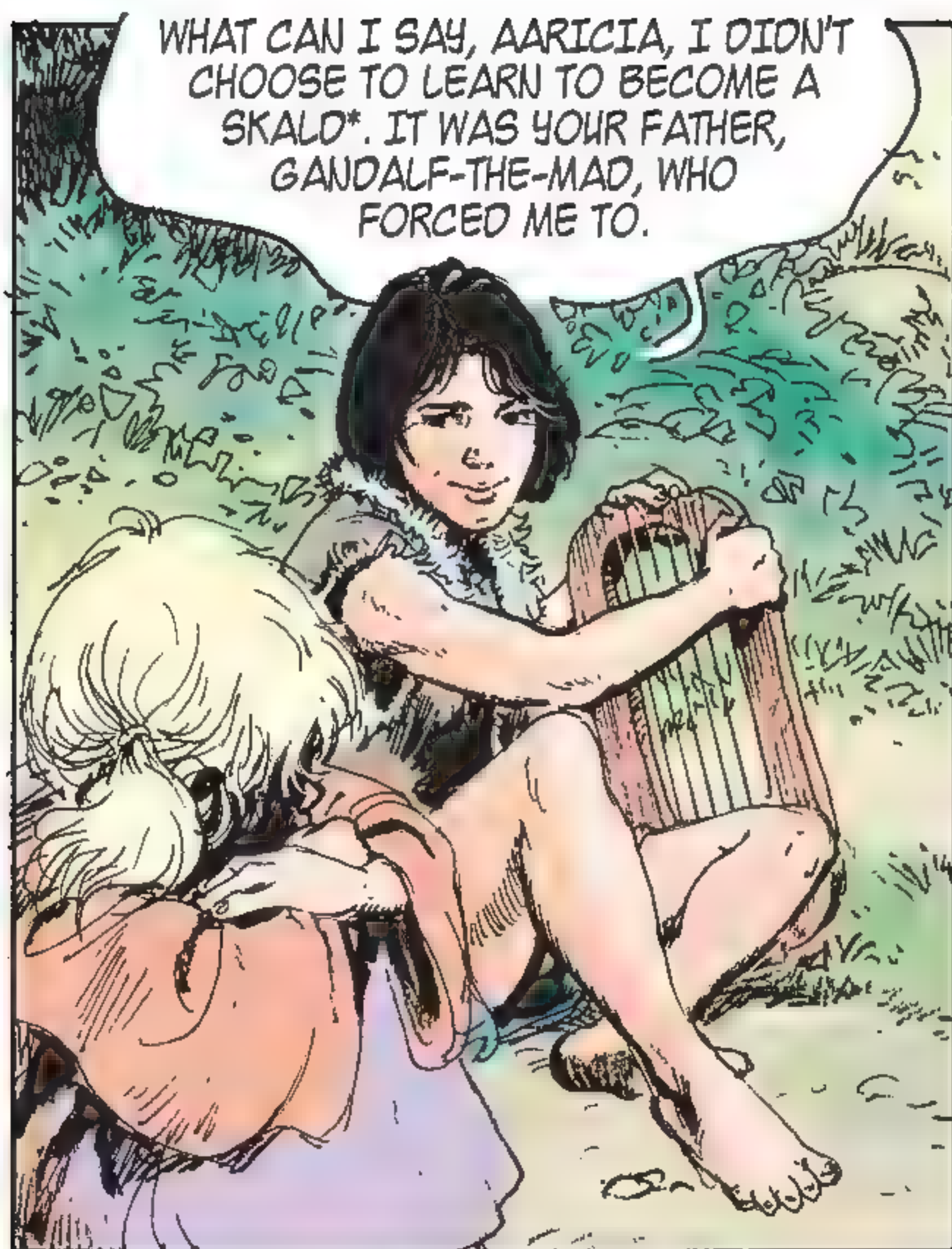
I WILL SPARE THE LIFE OF THIS LITTLE BASTARD FOR NOW! BUT AS A FOREIGNER TO THE CLAN, HE WILL LIVE APART FROM THE VILLAGE AND WILL NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS EXCEPT FOR A SKALD'S LUTE. AND THAT'S THAT!



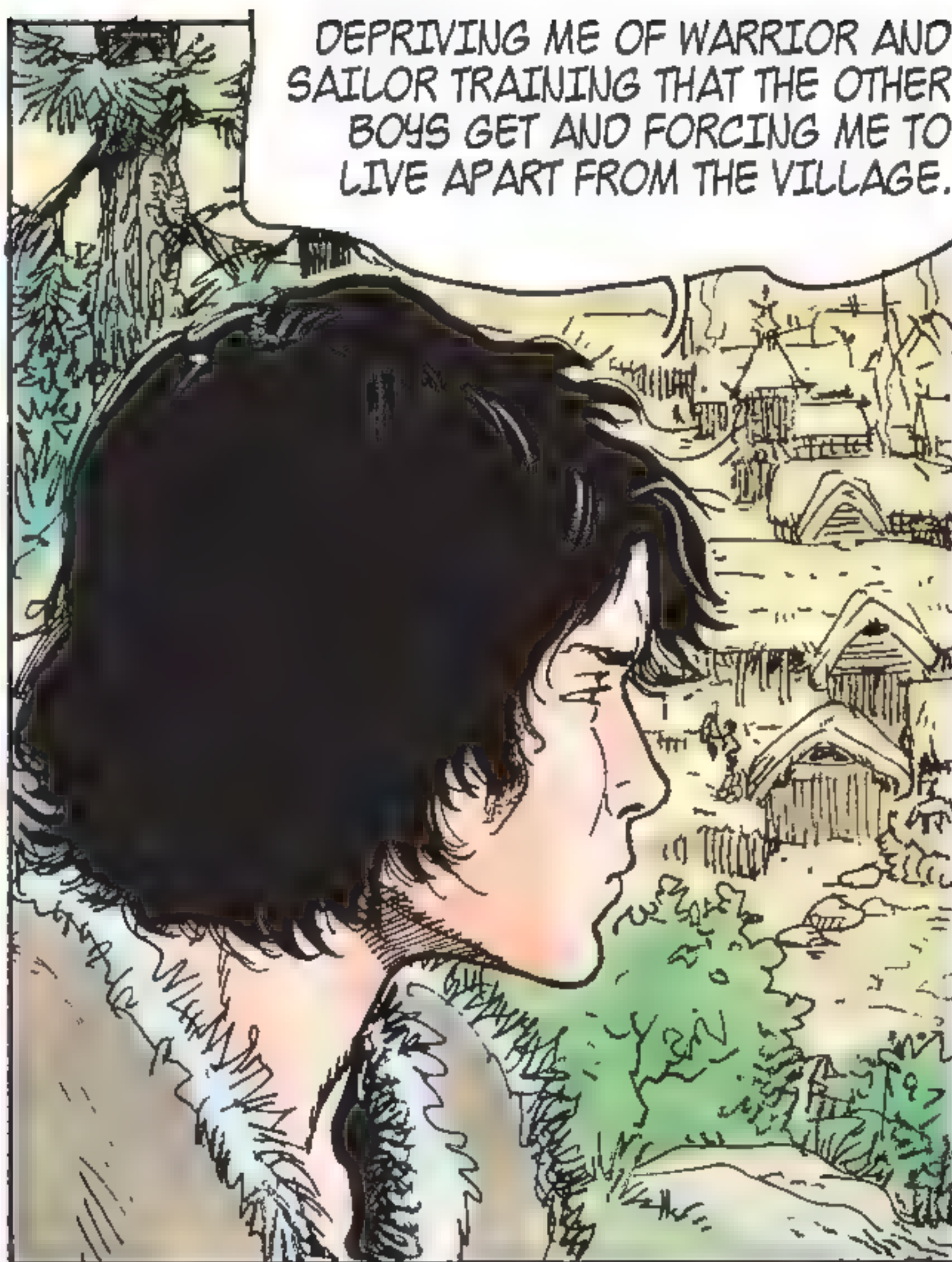
THORGAL, DID YOU SEE? IT HAS STOPPED SNOWING.

END

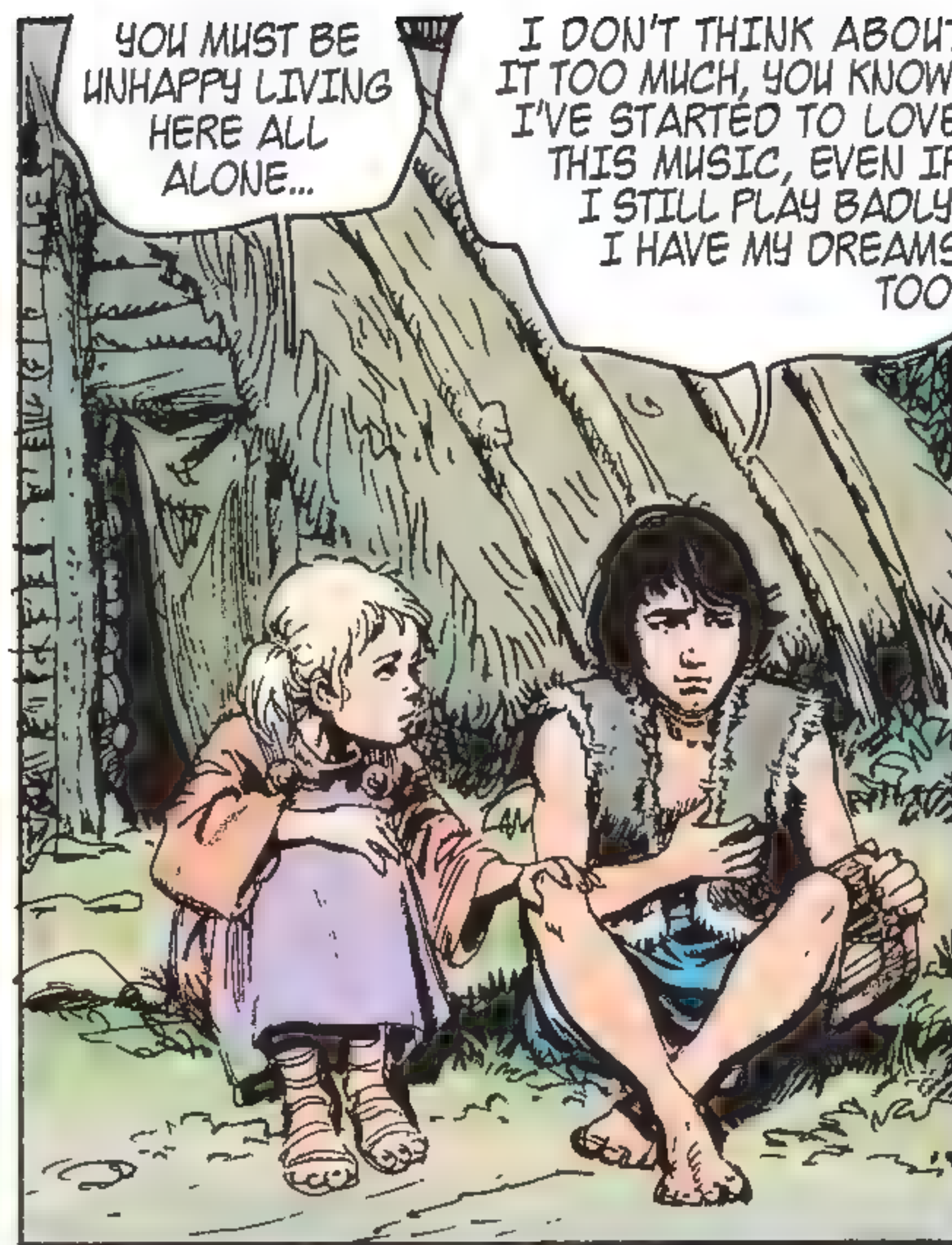




WHAT CAN I SAY, AARICIA, I DIDN'T CHOOSE TO LEARN TO BECOME A SKALD*. IT WAS YOUR FATHER, GANDALF-THE-MAD, WHO FORCED ME TO.



DEPRIVING ME OF WARRIOR AND SAILOR TRAINING THAT THE OTHER BOYS GET AND FORCING ME TO LIVE APART FROM THE VILLAGE.

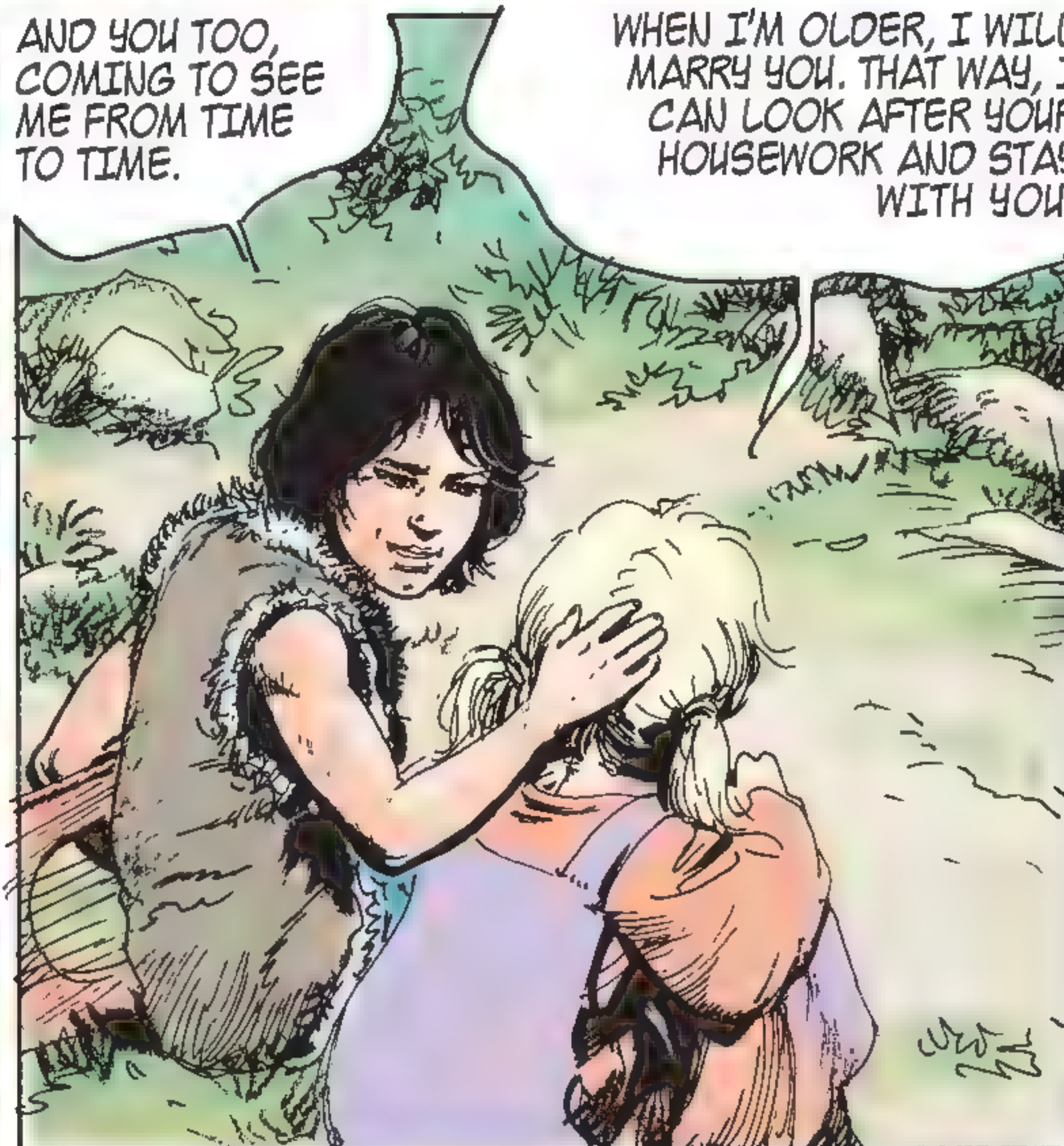


YOU MUST BE UNHAPPY LIVING HERE ALL ALONE...

I DON'T THINK ABOUT IT TOO MUCH, YOU KNOW. I'VE STARTED TO LOVE THIS MUSIC, EVEN IF I STILL PLAY BADLY. I HAVE MY DREAMS TOO.

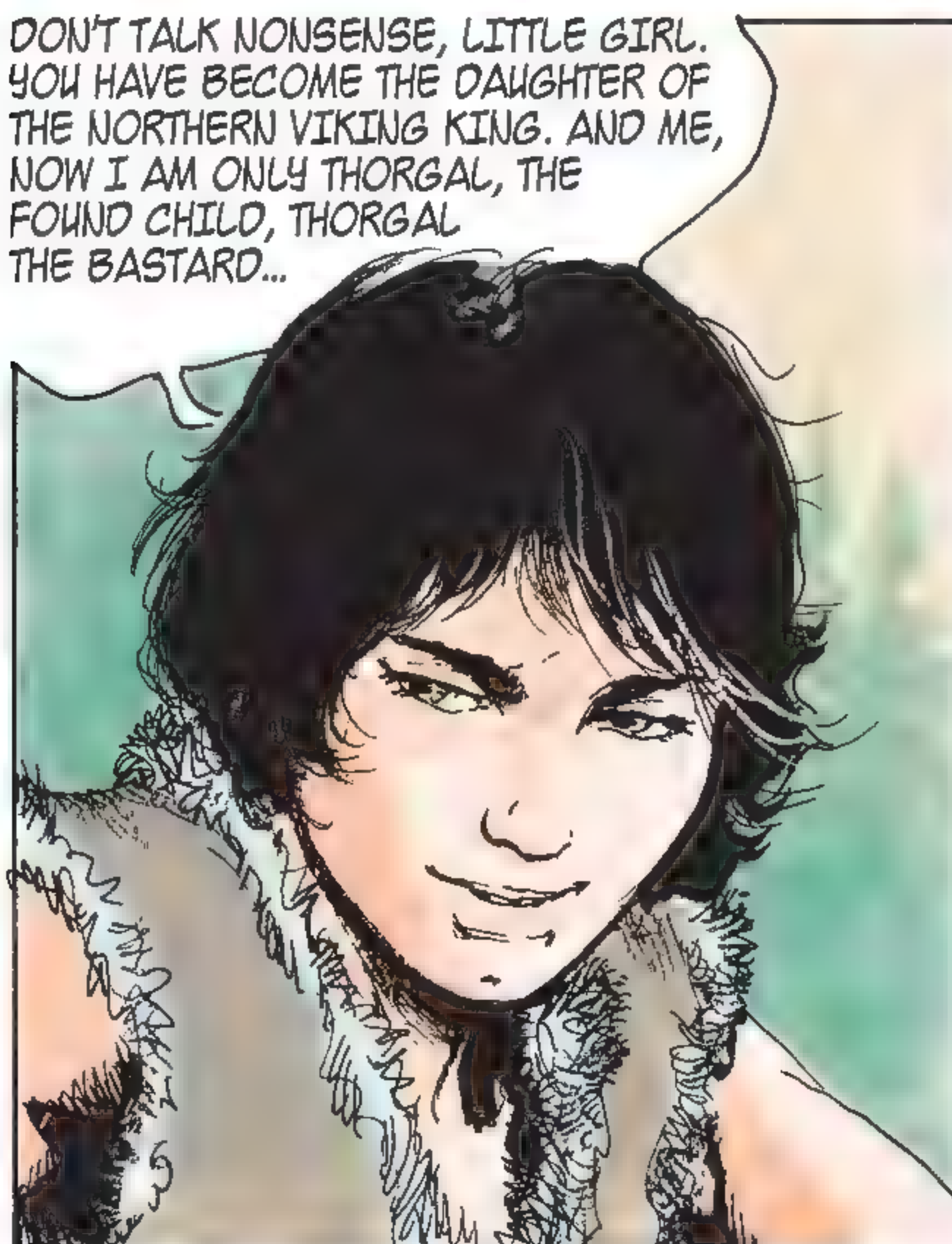


HUNTING AND FISHING TAKE UP A LOT OF MY TIME. AND ALSO THE MEAT THAT I HAVE TO SALT FOR WINTER, THE HIDES TO TAN, MY CLOTHES TO SEW, THE PEAT THAT MUST BE DRIED...

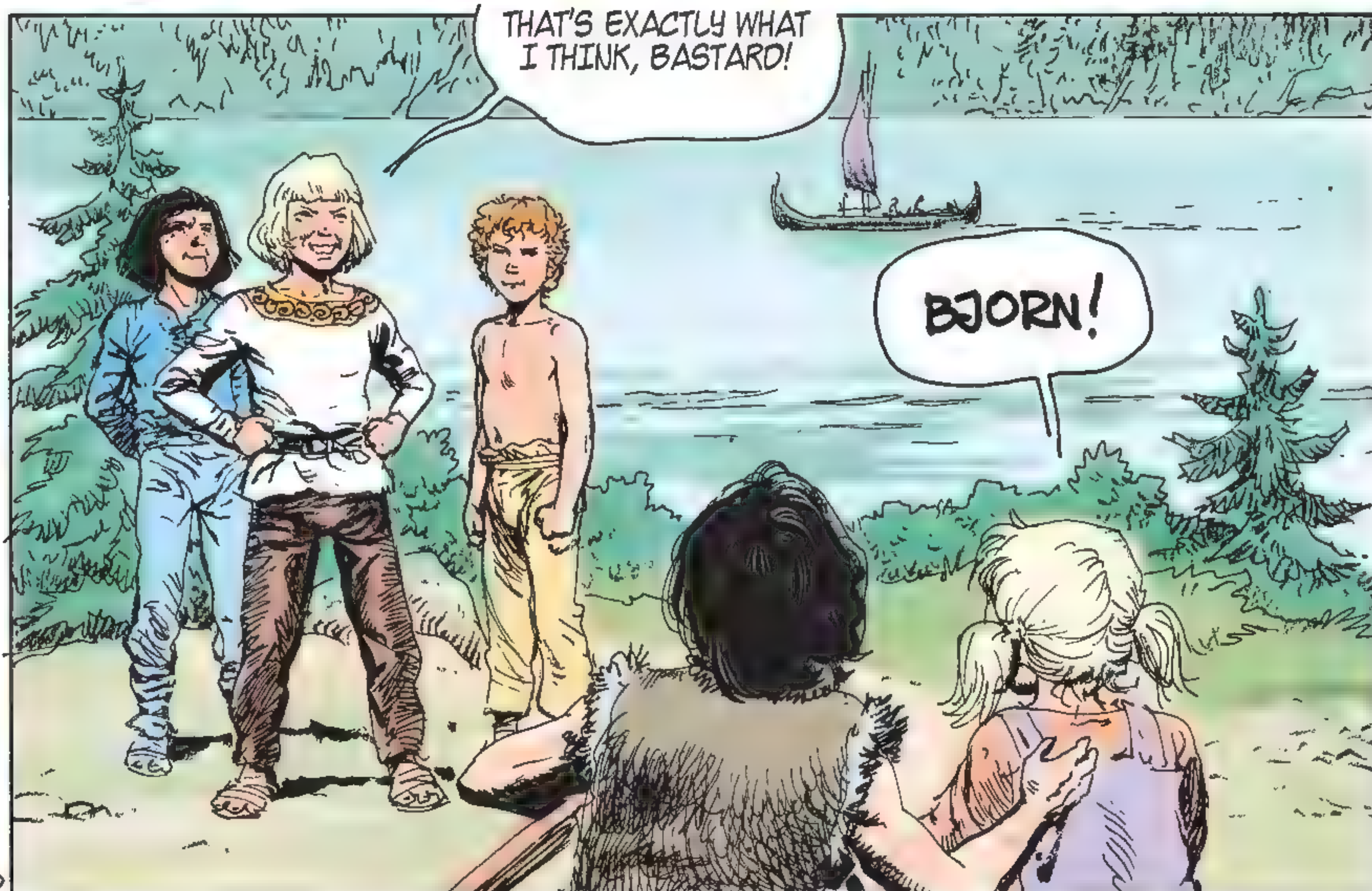


AND YOU TOO, COMING TO SEE ME FROM TIME TO TIME.

WHEN I'M OLDER, I WILL MARRY YOU. THAT WAY, I CAN LOOK AFTER YOUR HOUSEWORK AND STAY WITH YOU.



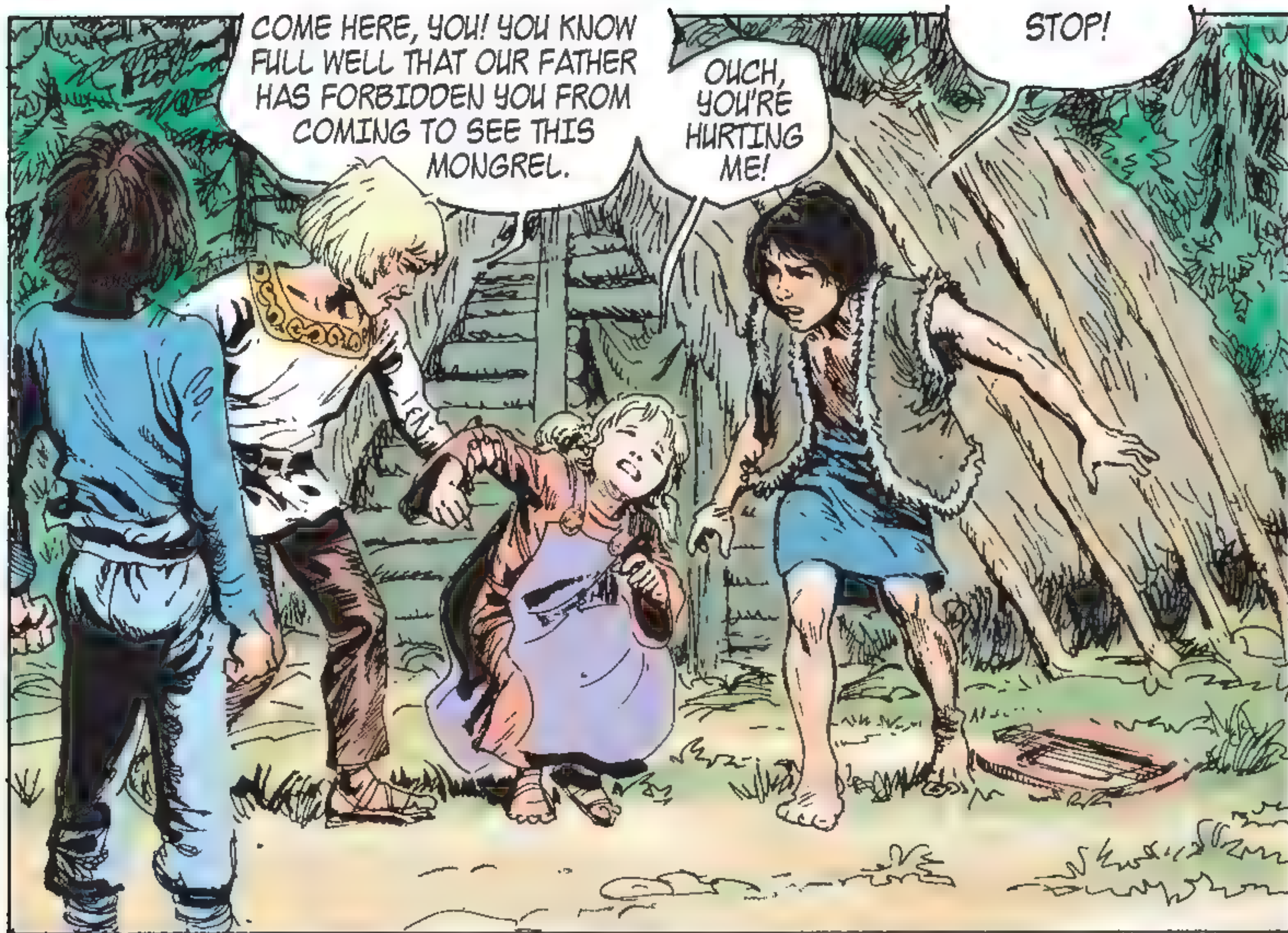
DON'T TALK NONSENSE, LITTLE GIRL. YOU HAVE BECOME THE DAUGHTER OF THE NORTHERN VIKING KING. AND ME, NOW I AM ONLY THORGAL, THE FOUND CHILD, THORGAL THE BASTARD...



THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I THINK, BASTARD!

BJORN!

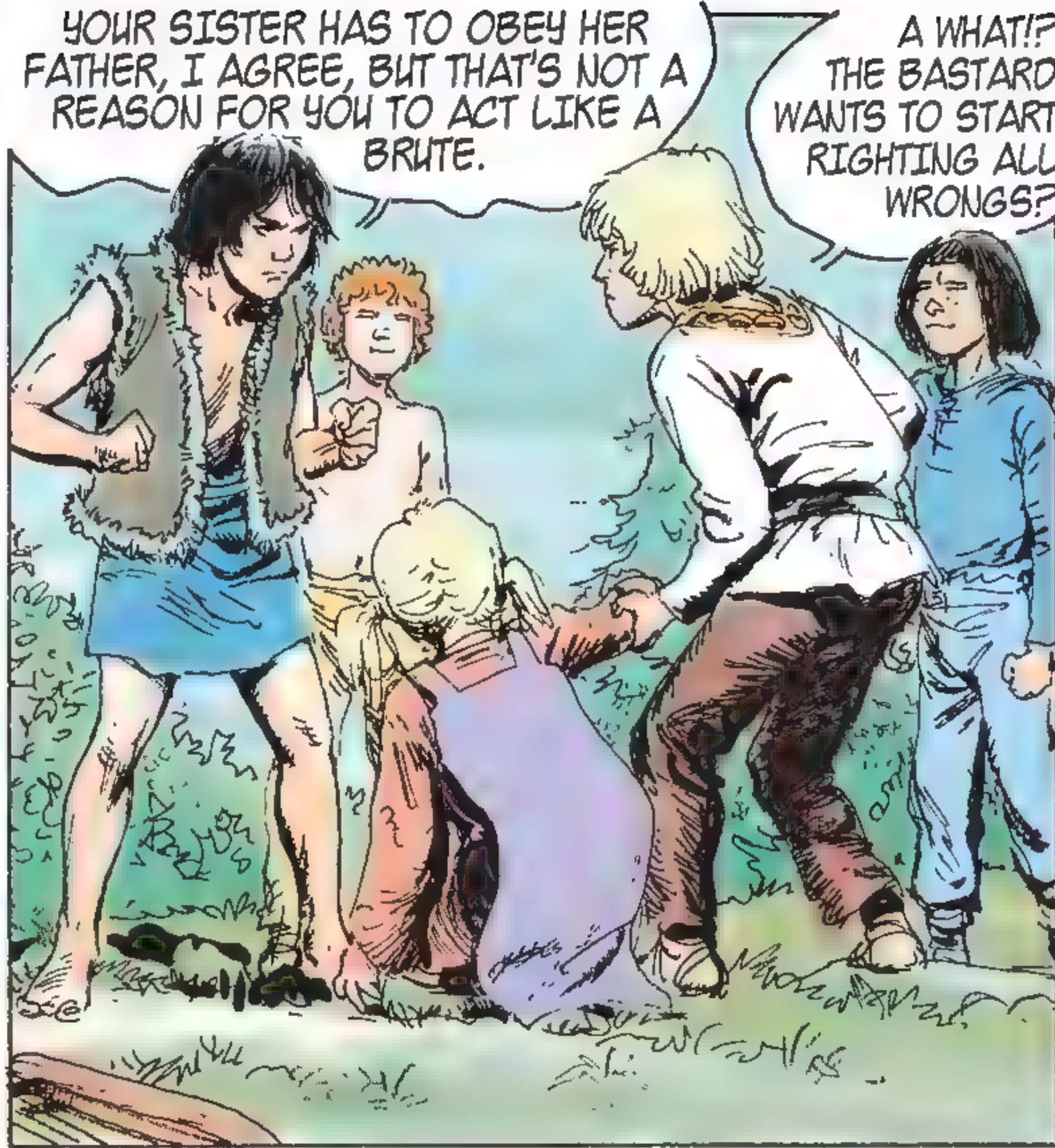
*SINGING POET IN OLD SCANDINAVIA



COME HERE, YOU! YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT OUR FATHER HAS FORBIDDEN YOU FROM COMING TO SEE THIS MONGREL.

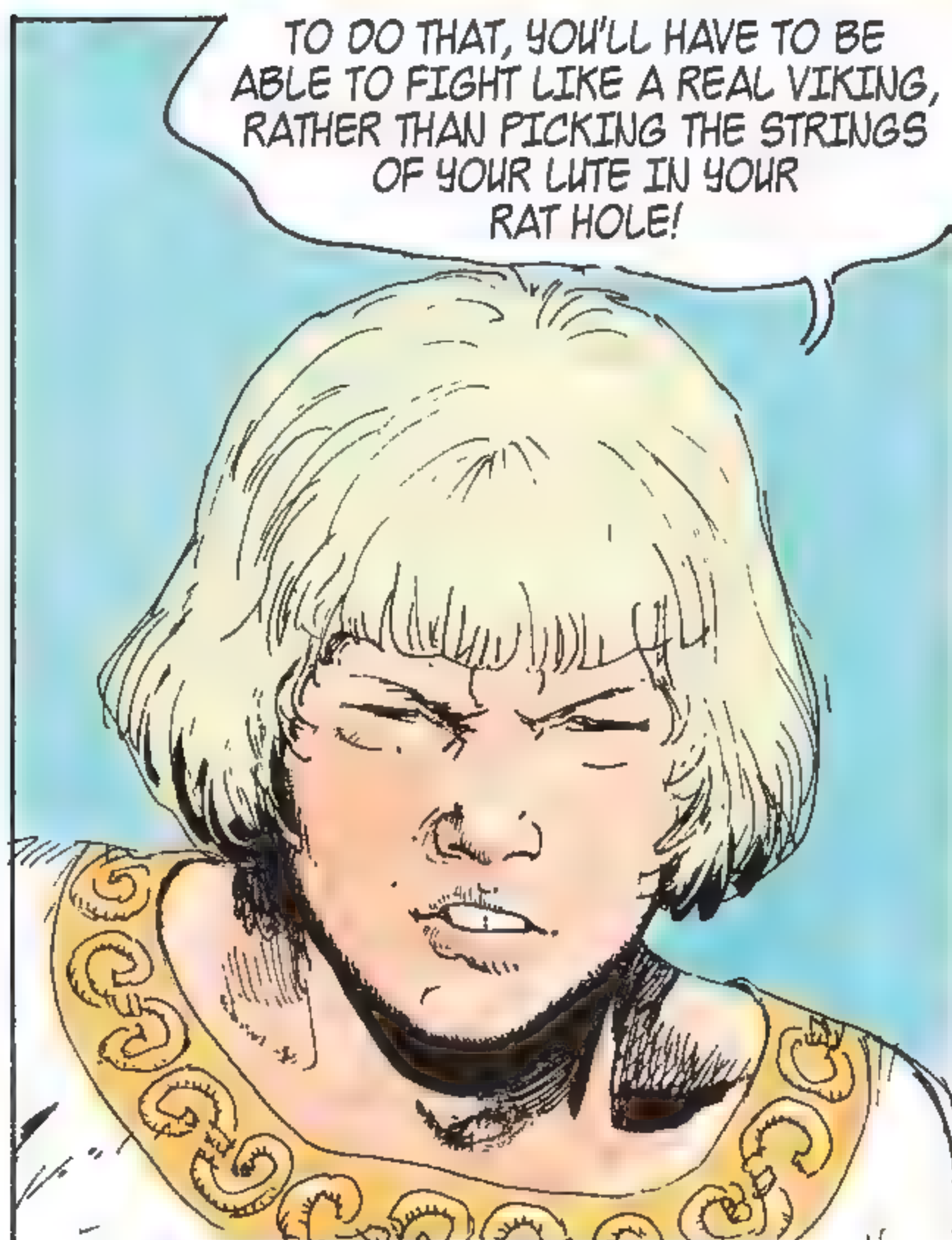
OUCH, YOU'RE HURTING ME!

STOP!



YOUR SISTER HAS TO OBEY HER FATHER, I AGREE, BUT THAT'S NOT A REASON FOR YOU TO ACT LIKE A BRUTE.

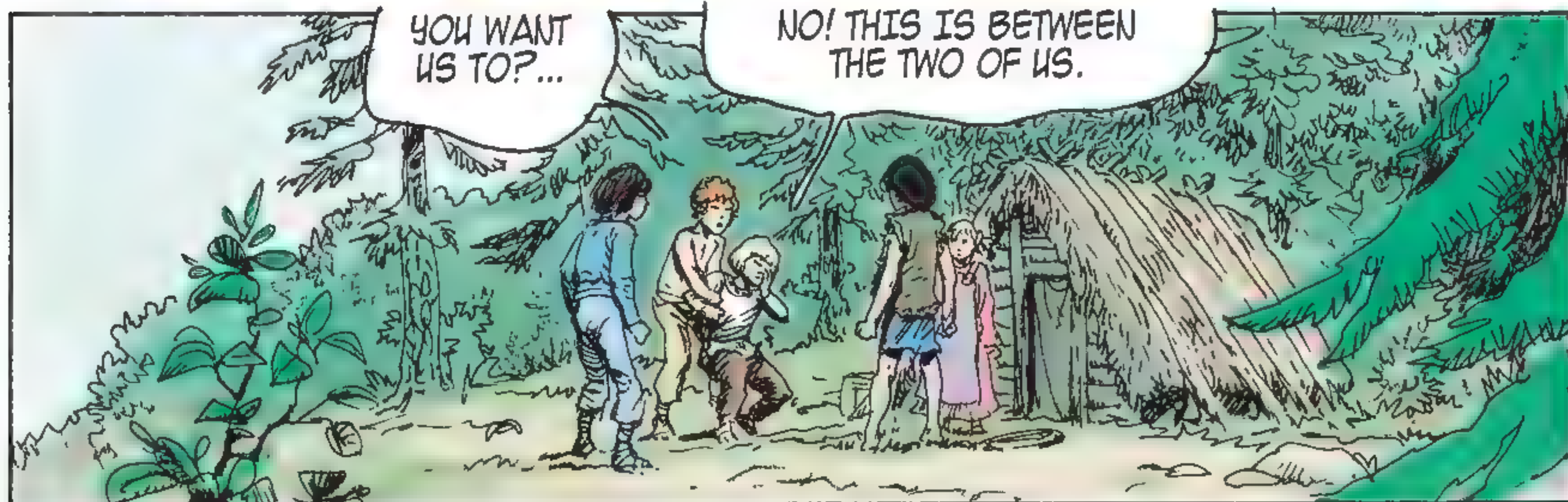
A WHAT!? THE BASTARD WANTS TO START RIGHTING ALL WRONGS?



TO DO THAT, YOU'LL HAVE TO BE ABLE TO FIGHT LIKE A REAL VIKING, RATHER THAN PICKING THE STRINGS OF YOUR LUTE IN YOUR RAT HOLE!

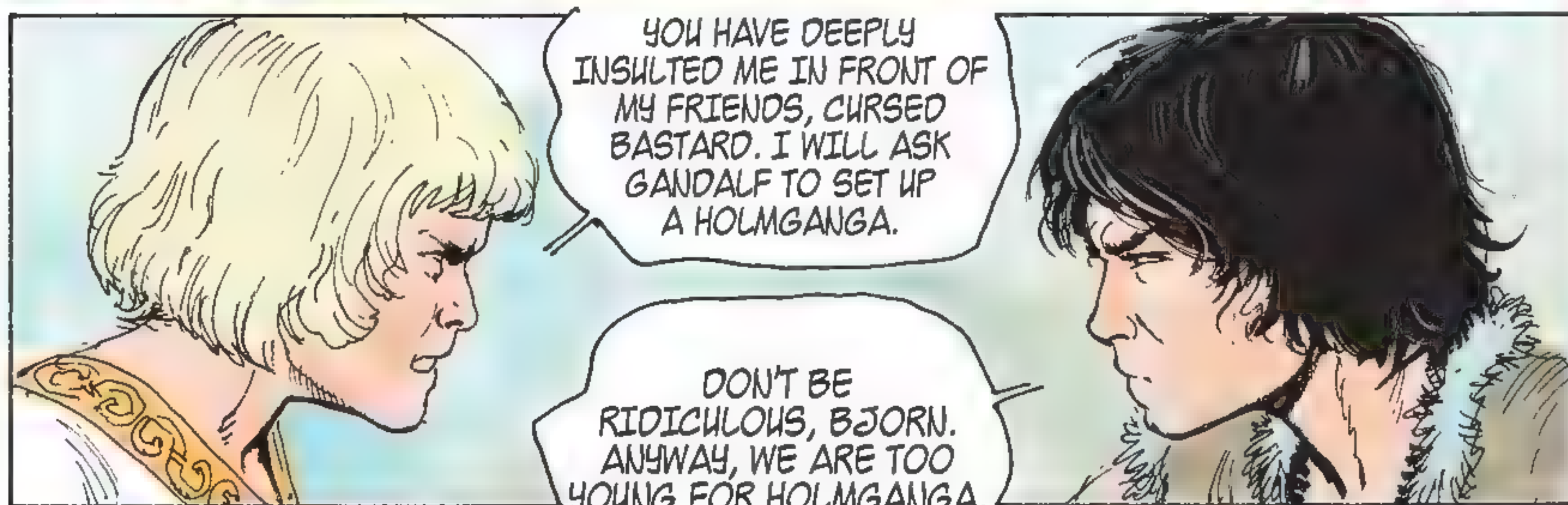


ONE DOESN'T AFFECT THE OTHER, AS YOU CAN SEE.



YOU WANT US TO?...

NO! THIS IS BETWEEN THE TWO OF US.



YOU HAVE DEEPLY INSULTED ME IN FRONT OF MY FRIENDS, CURSED BASTARD. I WILL ASK GANDALF TO SET UP A HOLMGANGA.

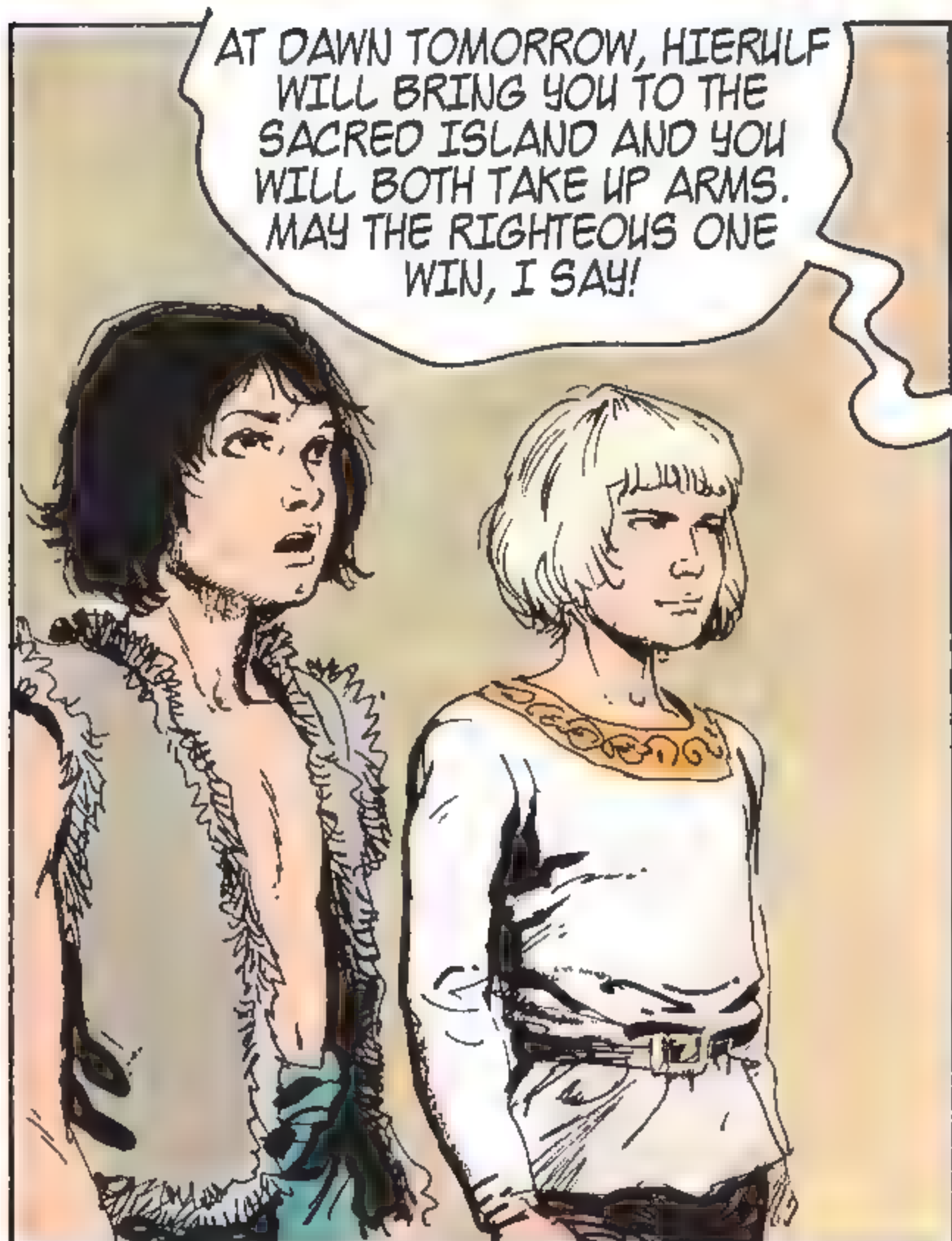
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, BJORN. ANYWAY, WE ARE TOO YOUNG FOR HOLMGANGA.



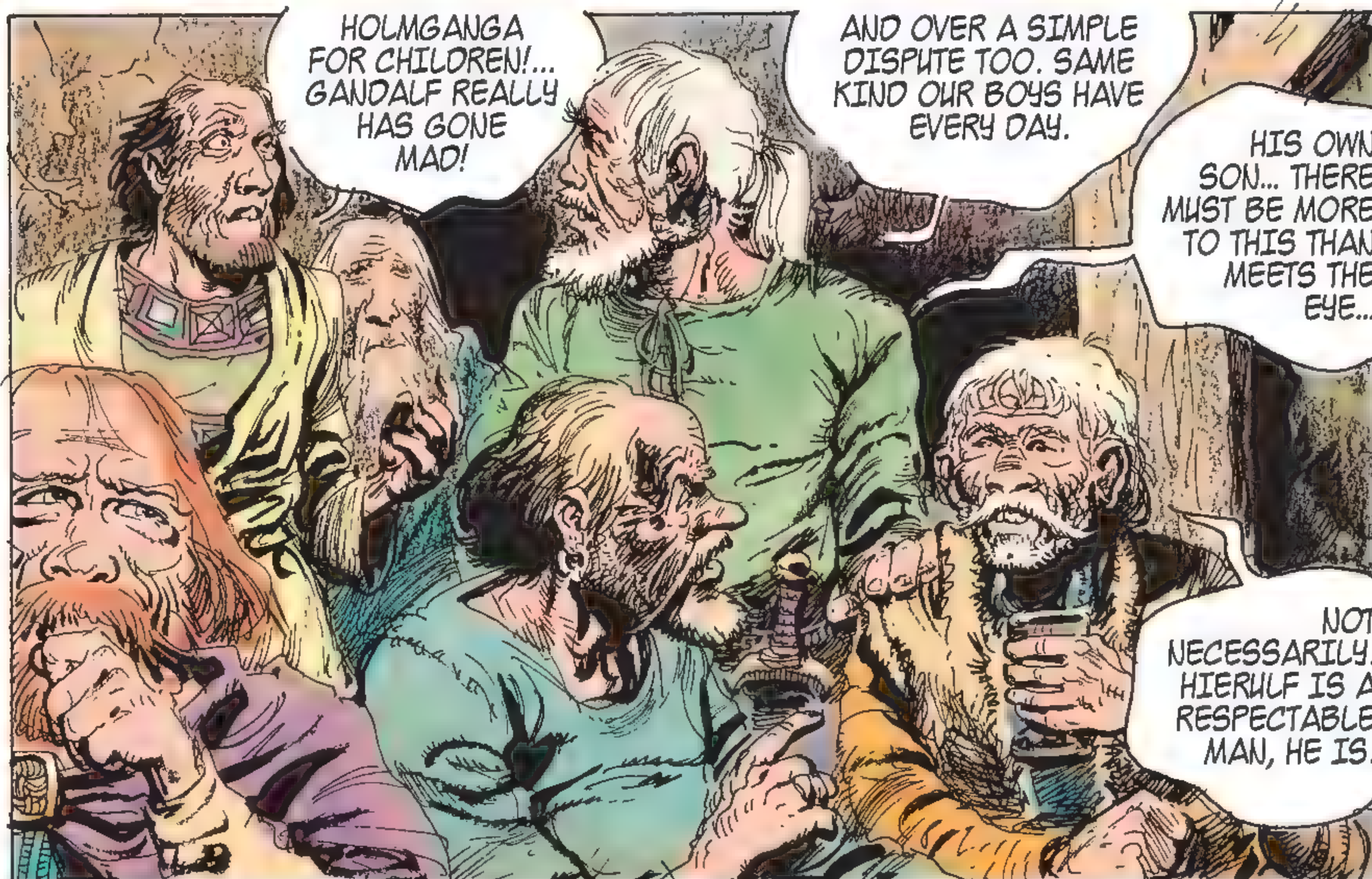
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT. DON'T FORGET THAT I AM THE SON OF THE KING.



I'VE LISTENED TO BOTH OF YOUR GRIEVANCES, AND EVEN THOUGH THORGAL ISN'T REALLY ONE OF US, I CONSENT TO YOUR CONFLICT BEING RESOLVED BY HOLMGANGA, ODIN'S JUDGEMENT.



AT DAWN TOMORROW, HIERULF WILL BRING YOU TO THE SACRED ISLAND AND YOU WILL BOTH TAKE UP ARMS. MAY THE RIGHTEOUS ONE WIN, I SAY!



HOLMGANGA FOR CHILDREN!... GANDALF REALLY HAS GONE MAD!

AND OVER A SIMPLE DISPUTE TOO. SAME KIND OUR BOYS HAVE EVERY DAY.

HIS OWN SON... THERE MUST BE MORE TO THIS THAN MEETS THE EYE...

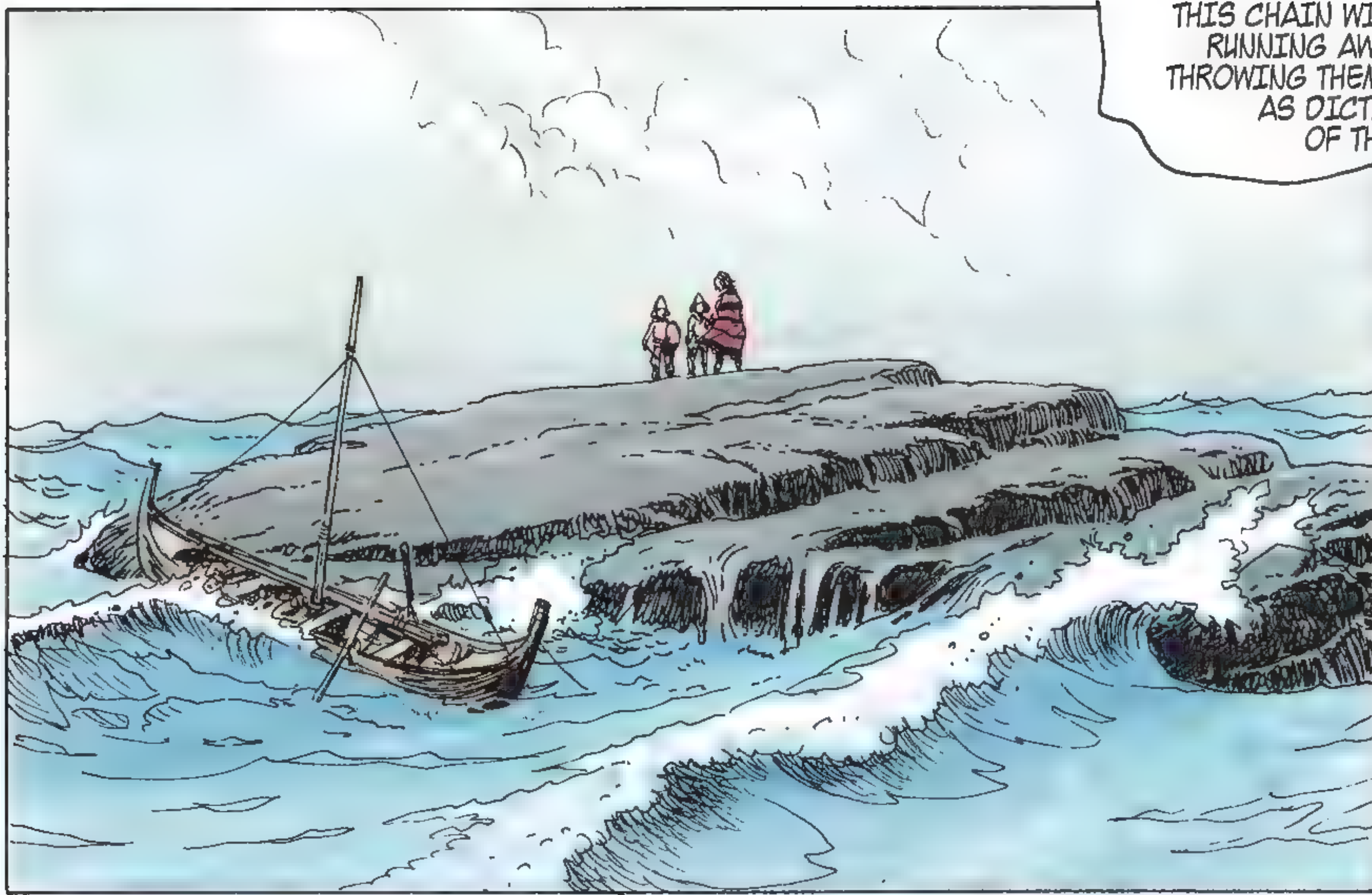
NOT NECESSARILY. HIERULF IS A RESPECTABLE MAN, HE IS.



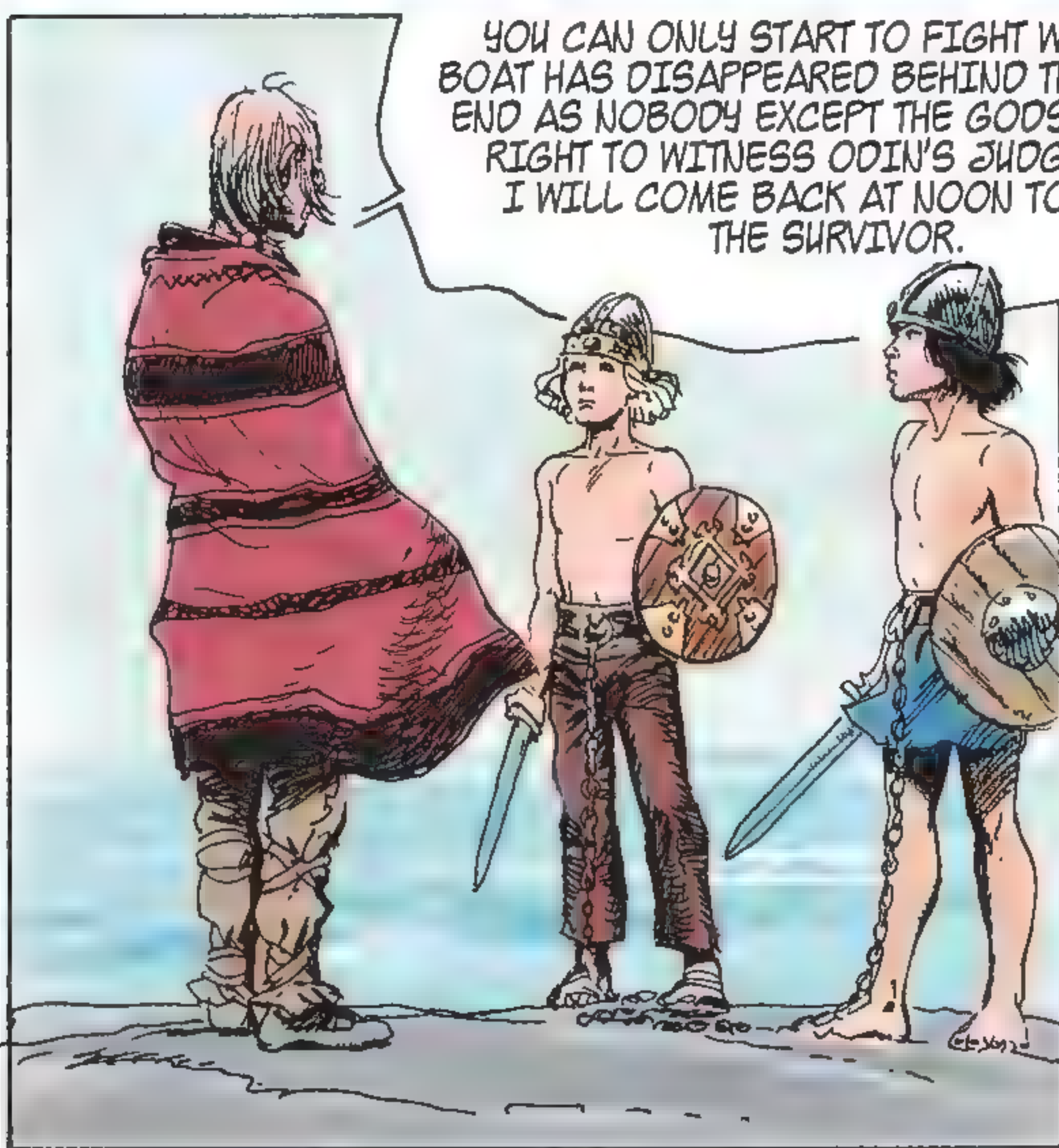
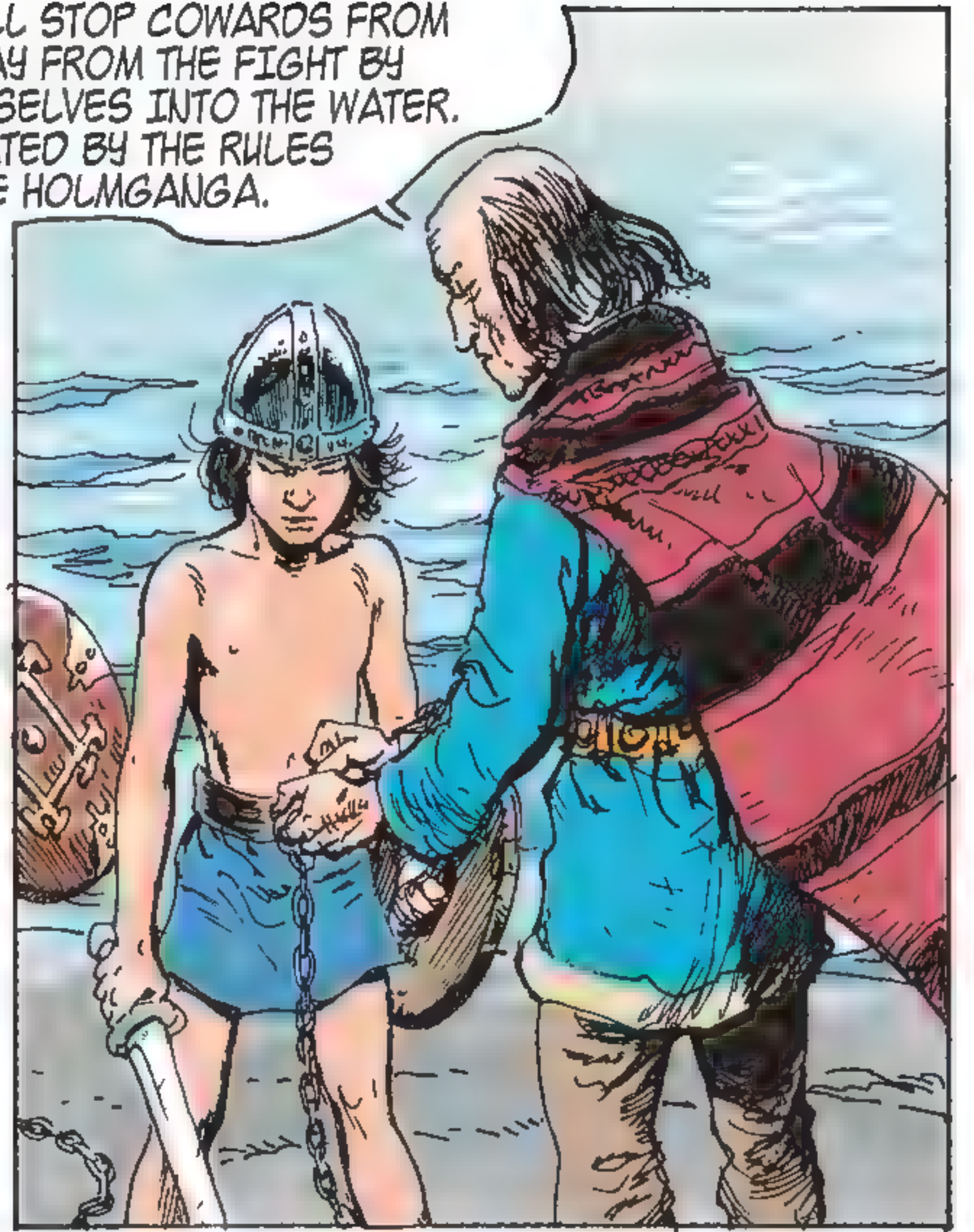
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, MY SON. TOMORROW, I WILL FINALLY BE RID OF THE ONLY POSSIBLE PRETENDER AND HEIR TO THE SUCCESSION OF LEIF HARALDSON...



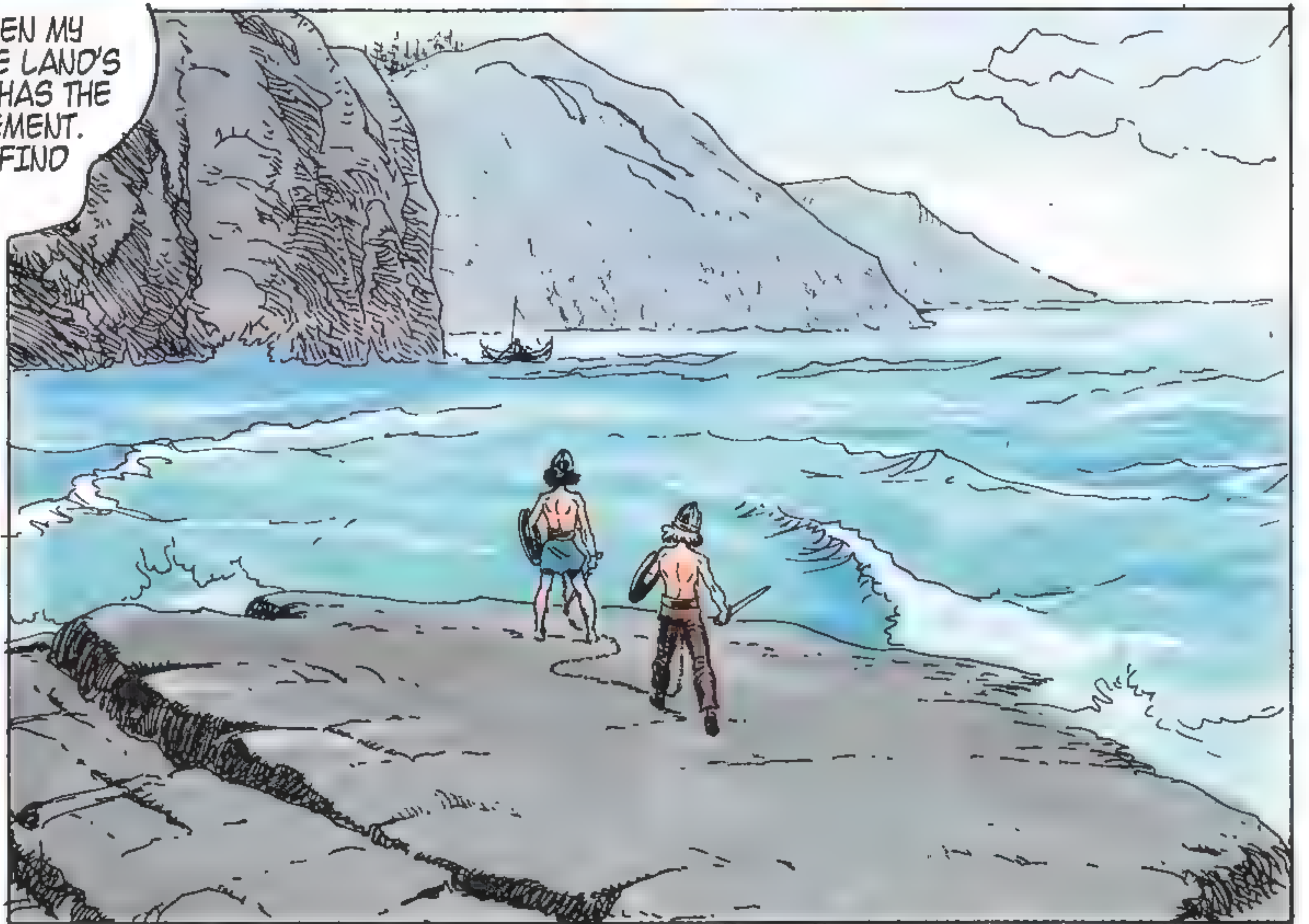
AND ALL OF THAT PERFECTLY CONFORMS TO OUR ANCESTRAL LAWS, HA HA HA!



THIS CHAIN WILL STOP COWARDS FROM
RUNNING AWAY FROM THE FIGHT BY
THROWING THEMSELVES INTO THE WATER.
AS DICTATED BY THE RULES
OF THE HOLMGANGA.



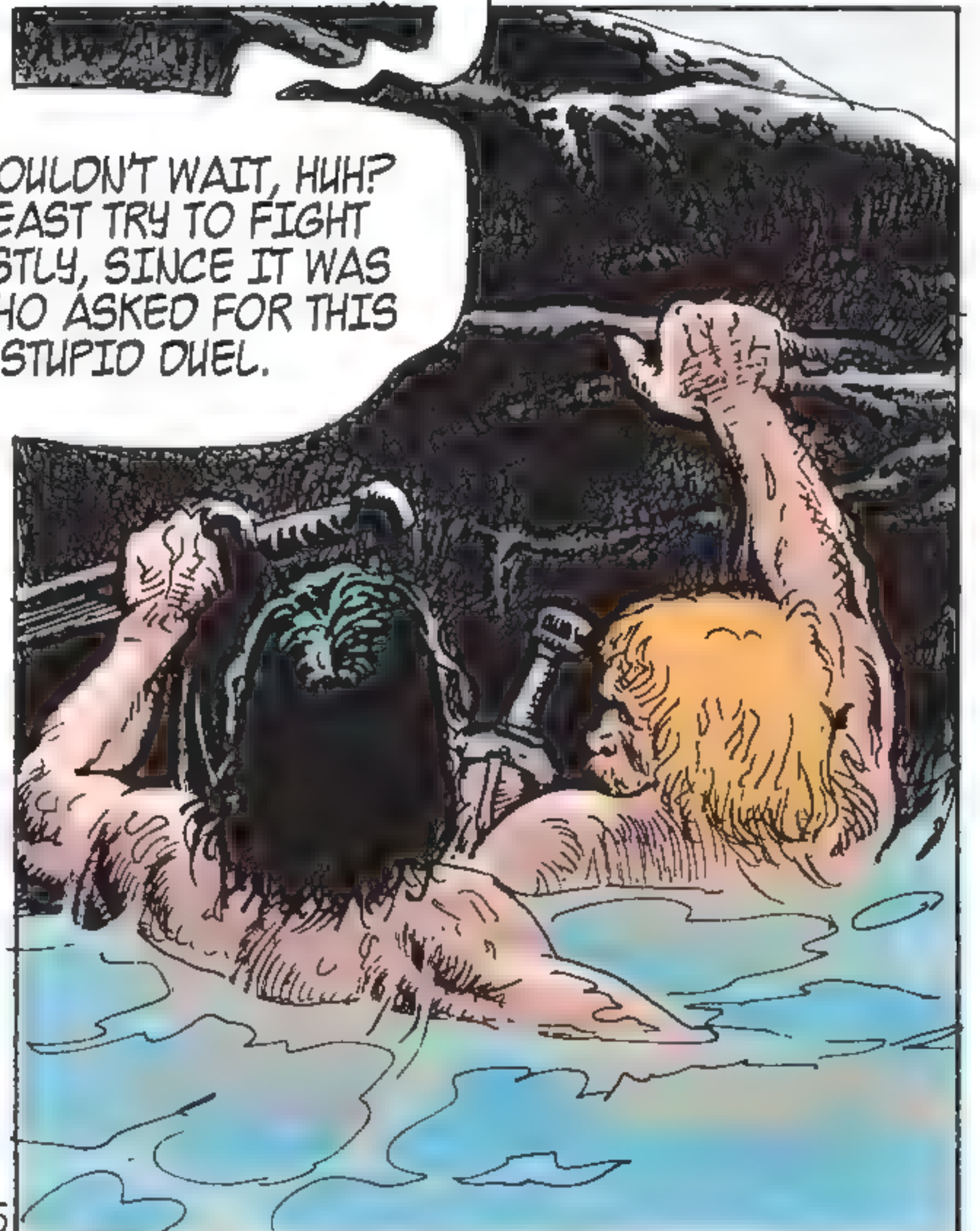
YOU CAN ONLY START TO FIGHT WHEN MY
BOAT HAS DISAPPEARED BEHIND THE LAND'S
END AS NOBODY EXCEPT THE GODS HAS THE
RIGHT TO WITNESS ODIN'S JUDGEMENT.
I WILL COME BACK AT NOON TO FIND
THE SURVIVOR.

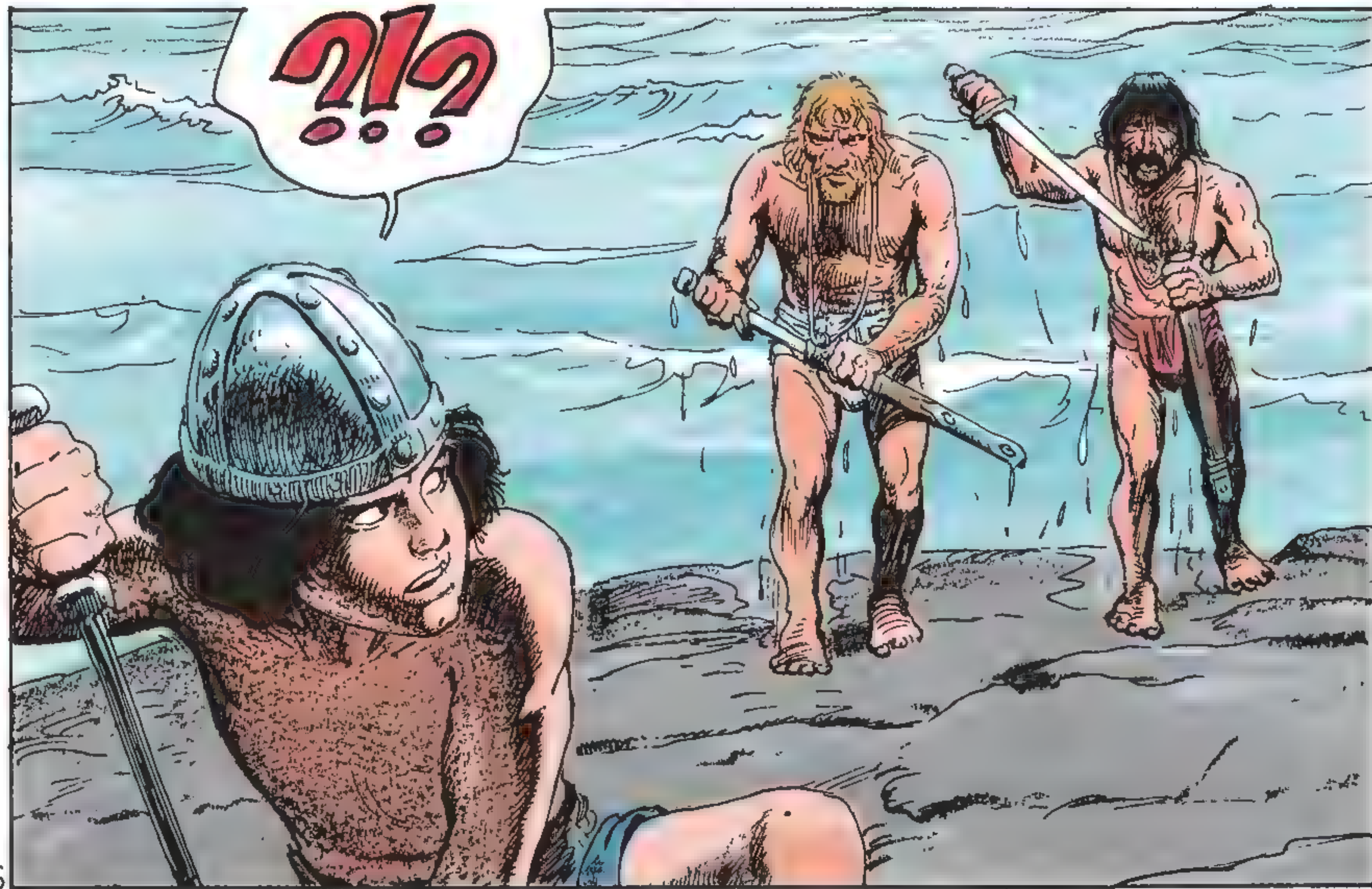
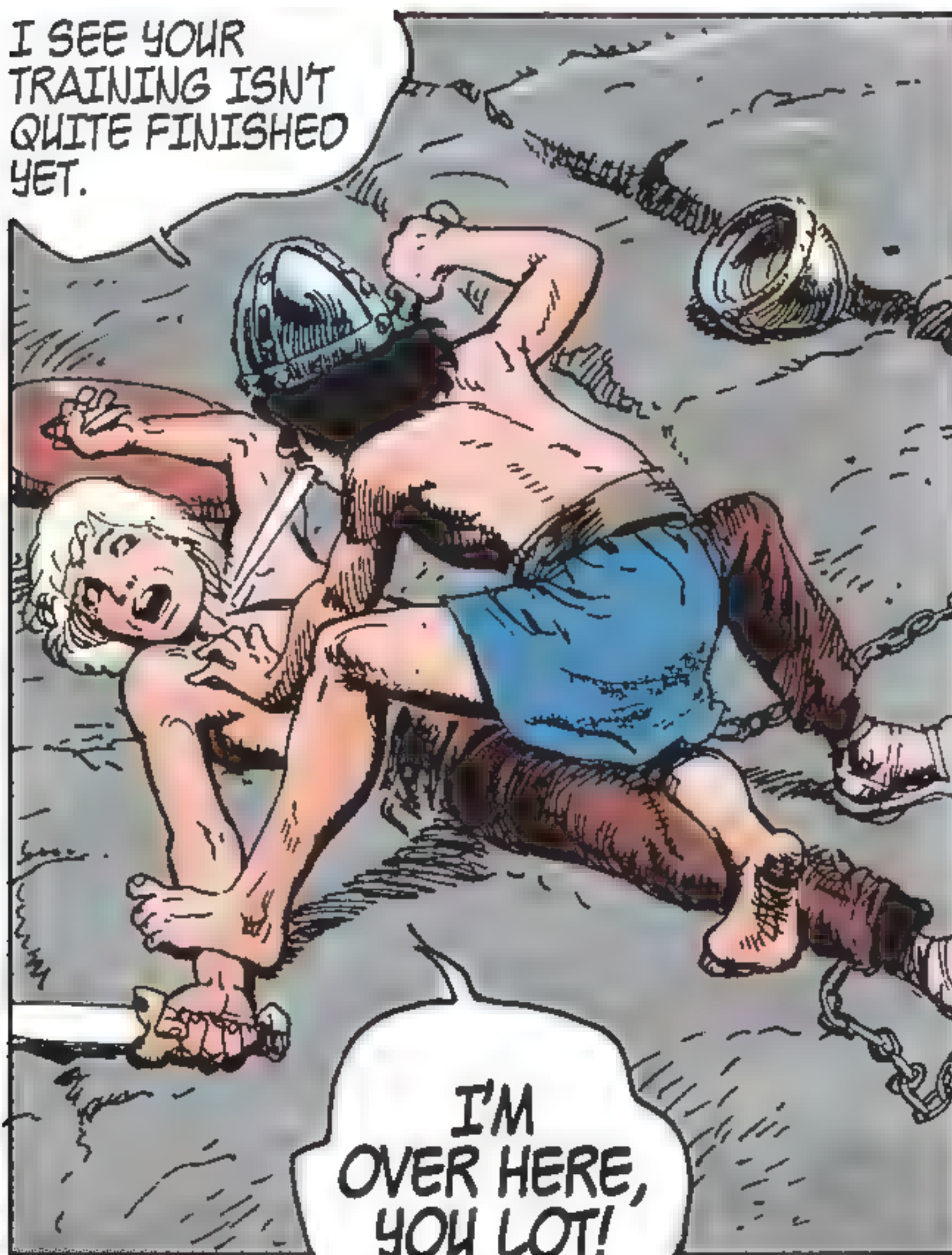
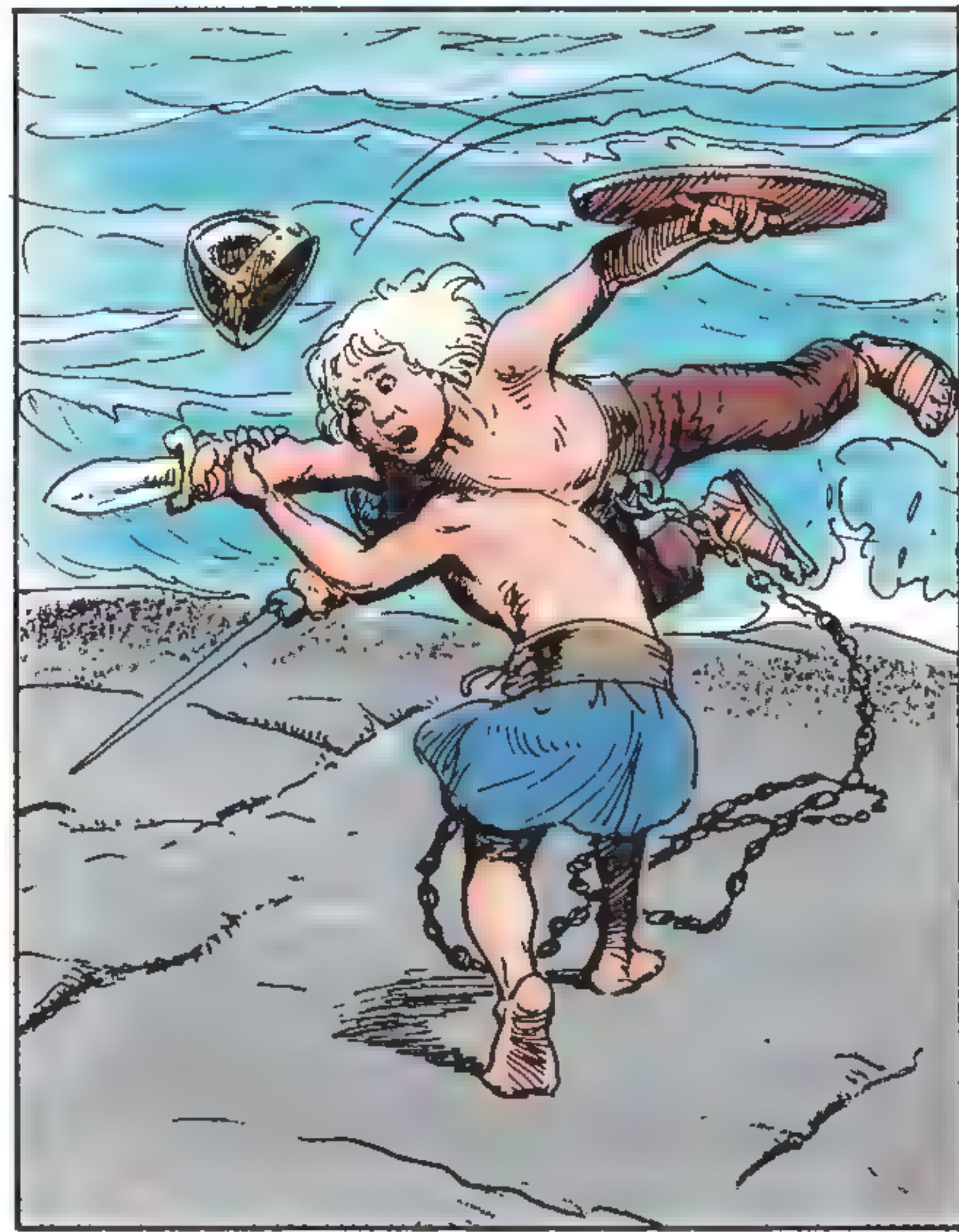
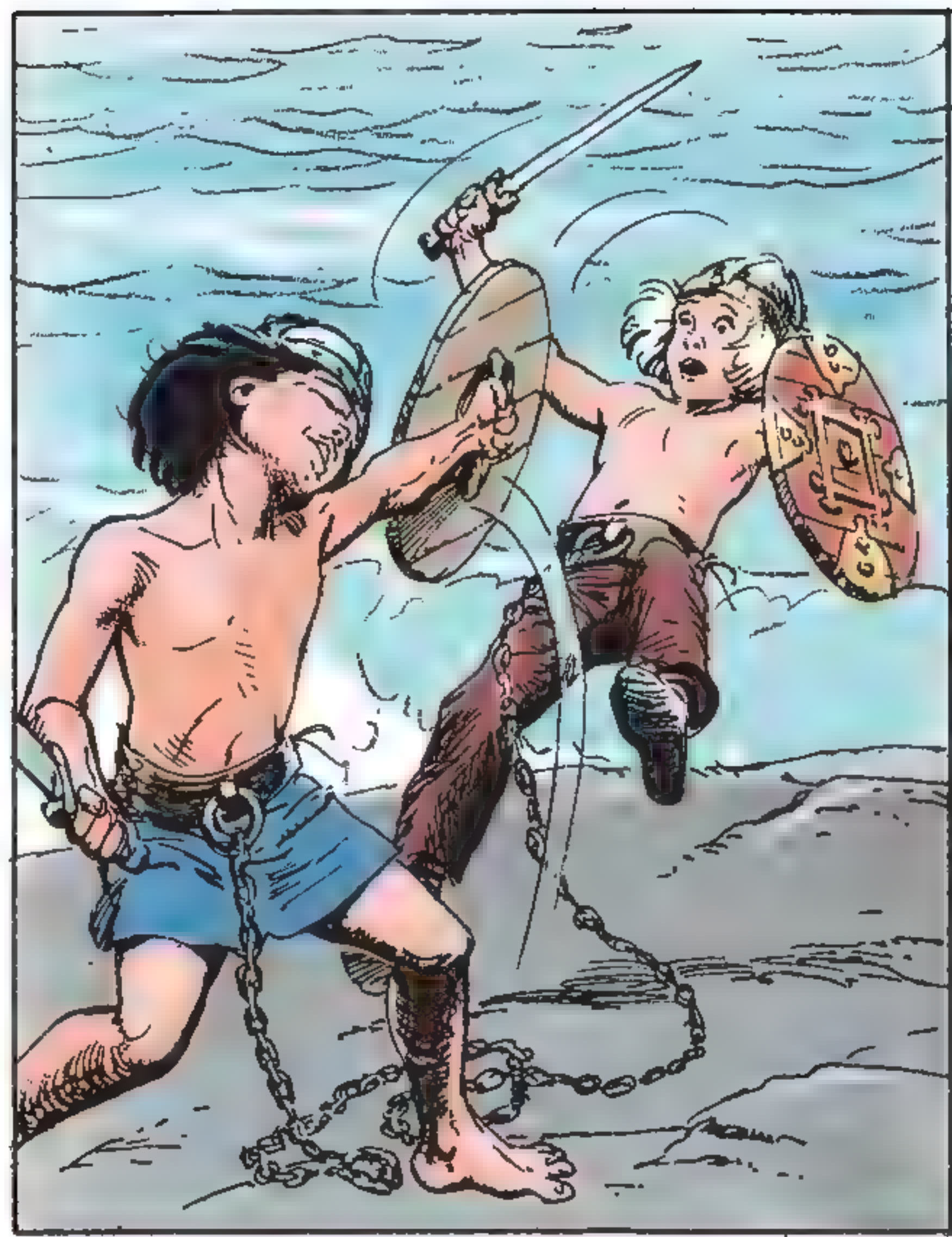
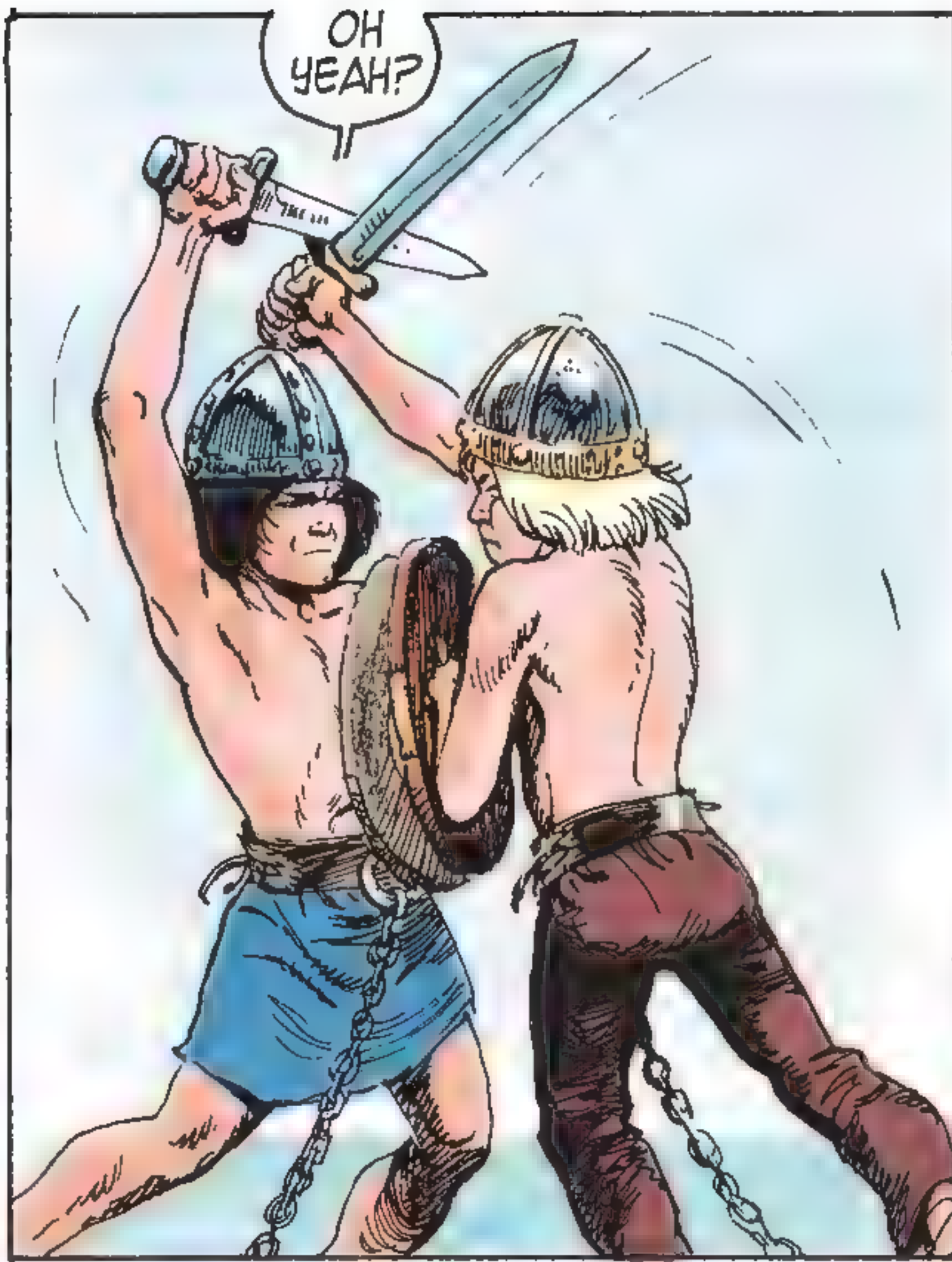


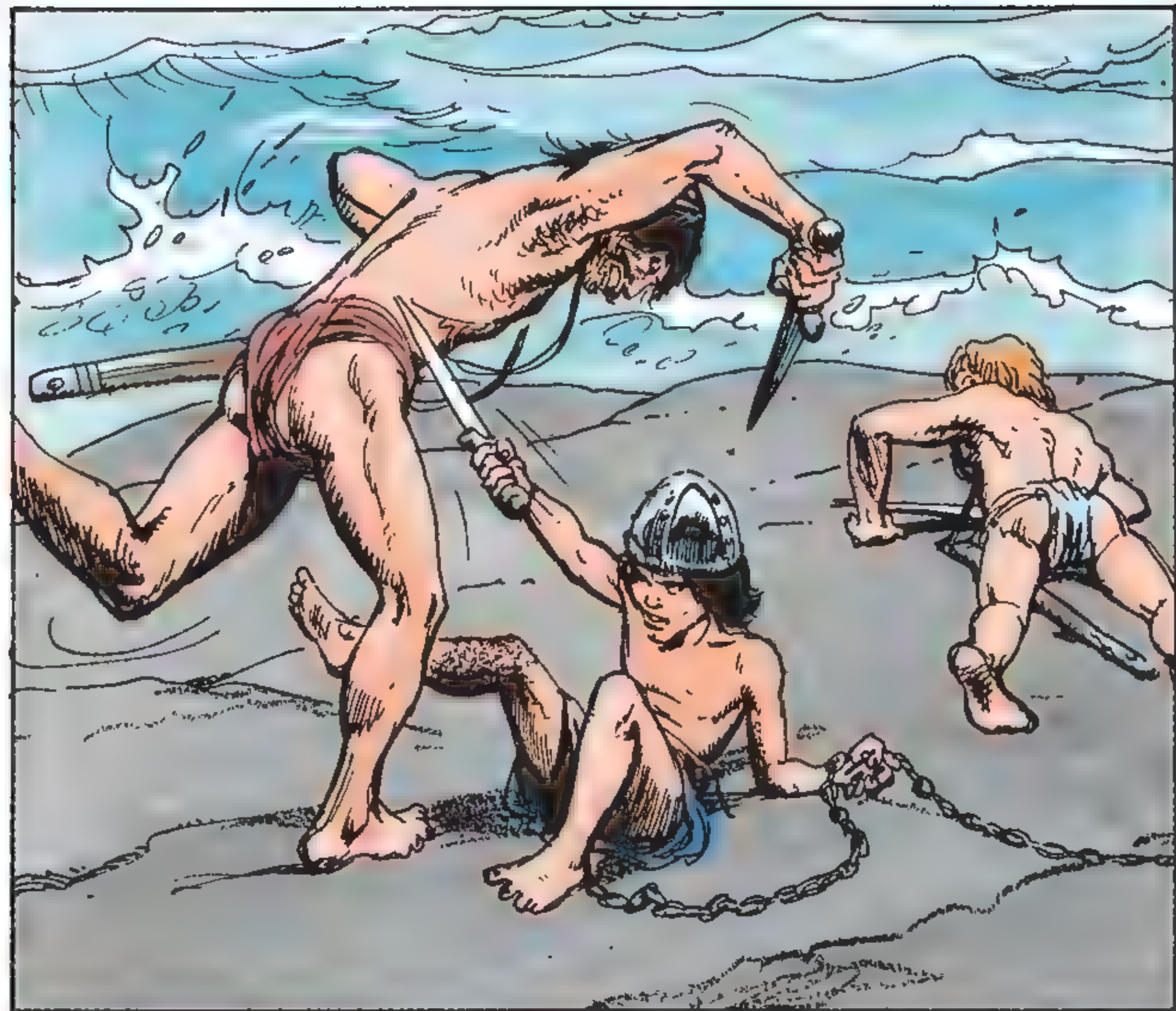
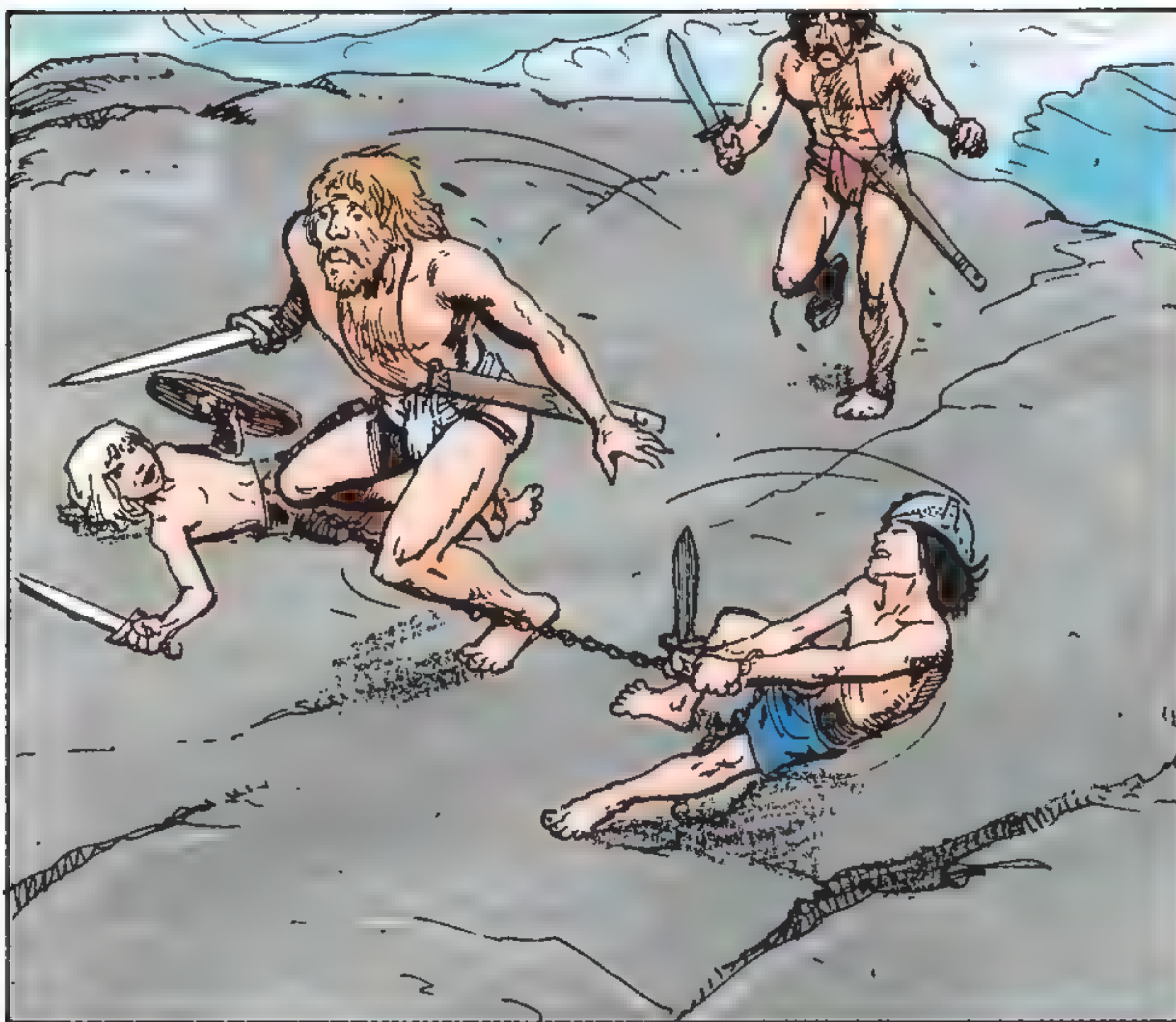
?!?



YOU COULDN'T WAIT, HUH?
AT LEAST TRY TO FIGHT
HONESTLY, SINCE IT WAS
YOU WHO ASKED FOR THIS
STUPID DUEL.

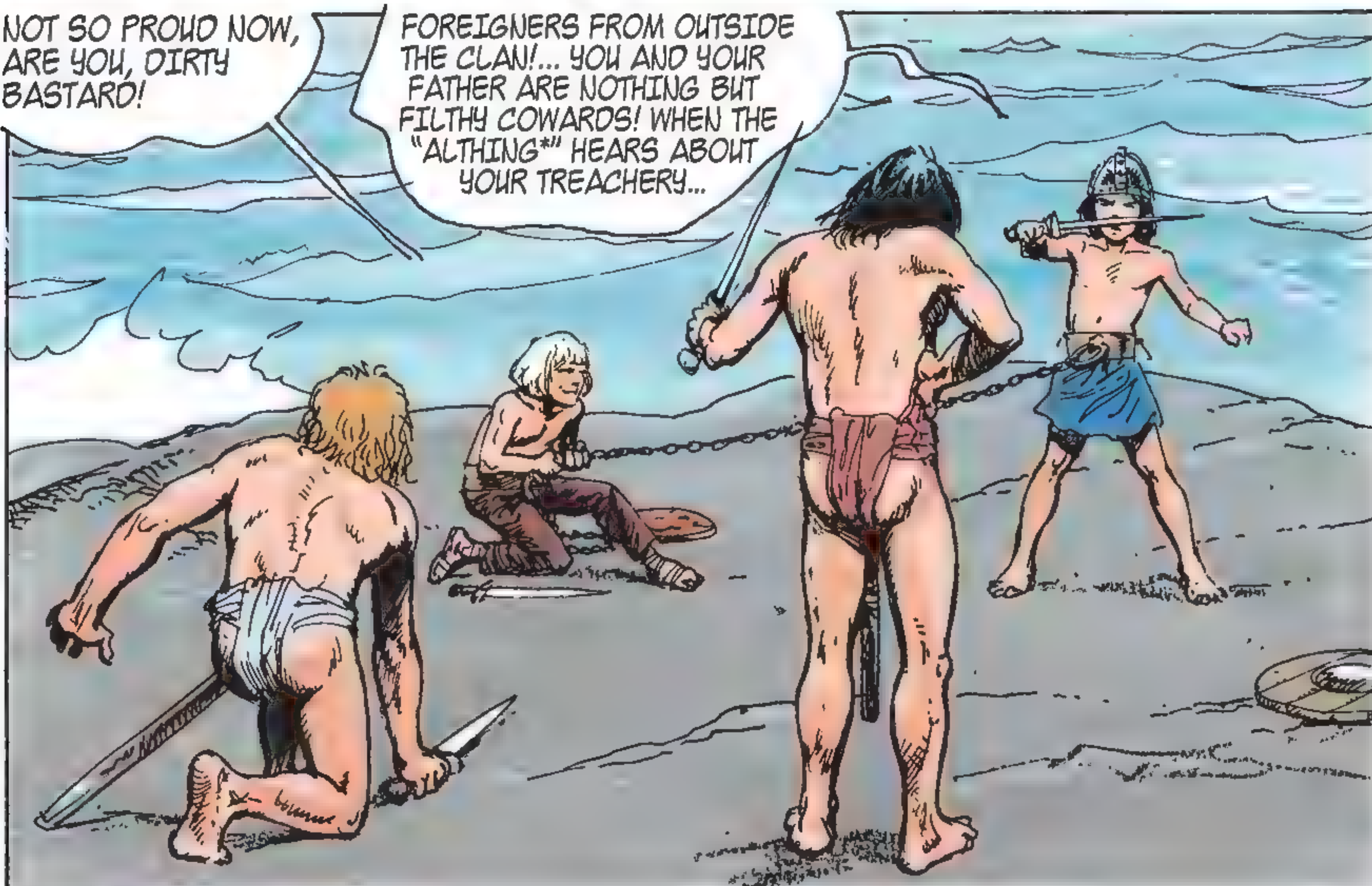




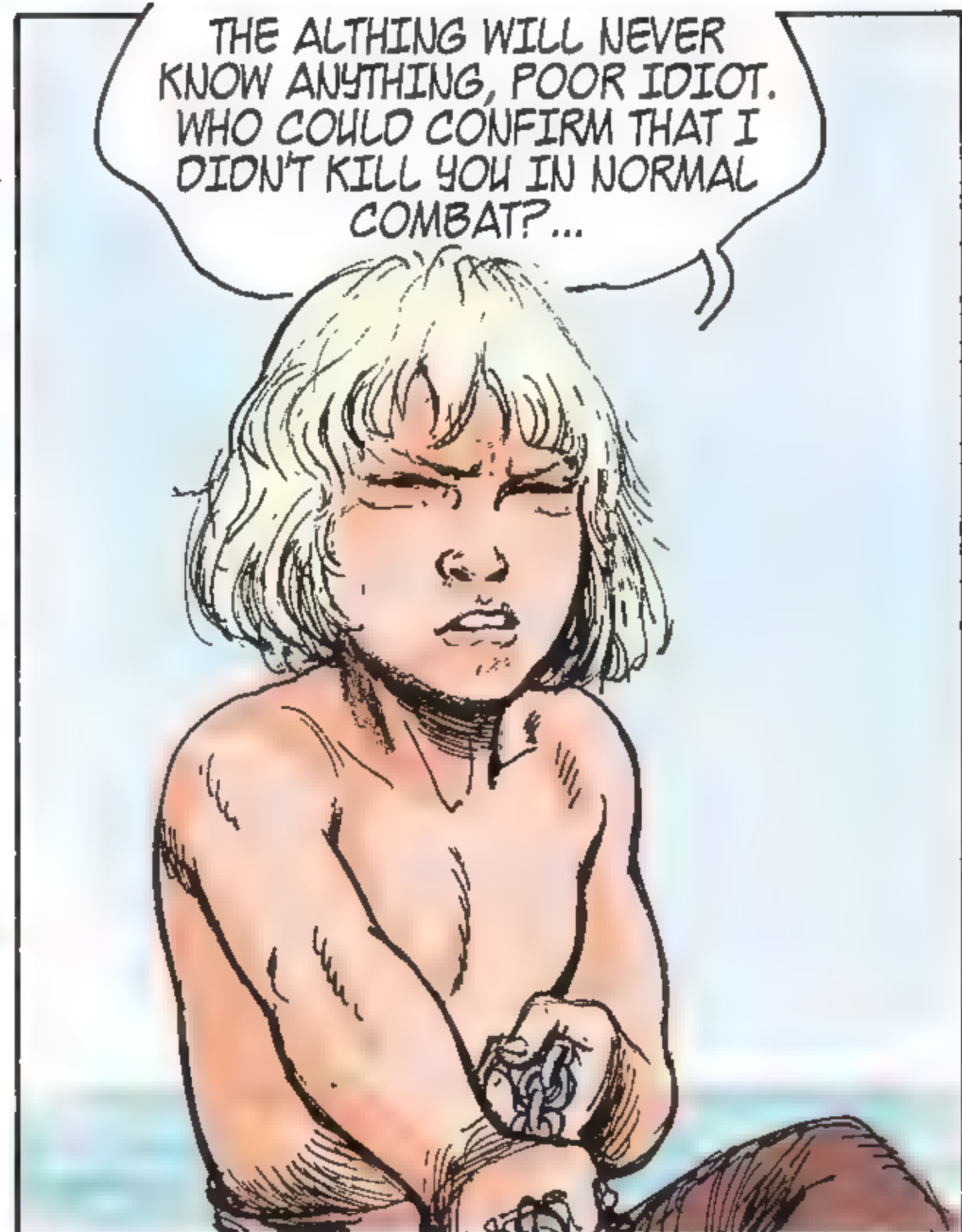


NOT SO PROUD NOW,
ARE YOU, DIRTY
BASTARD!

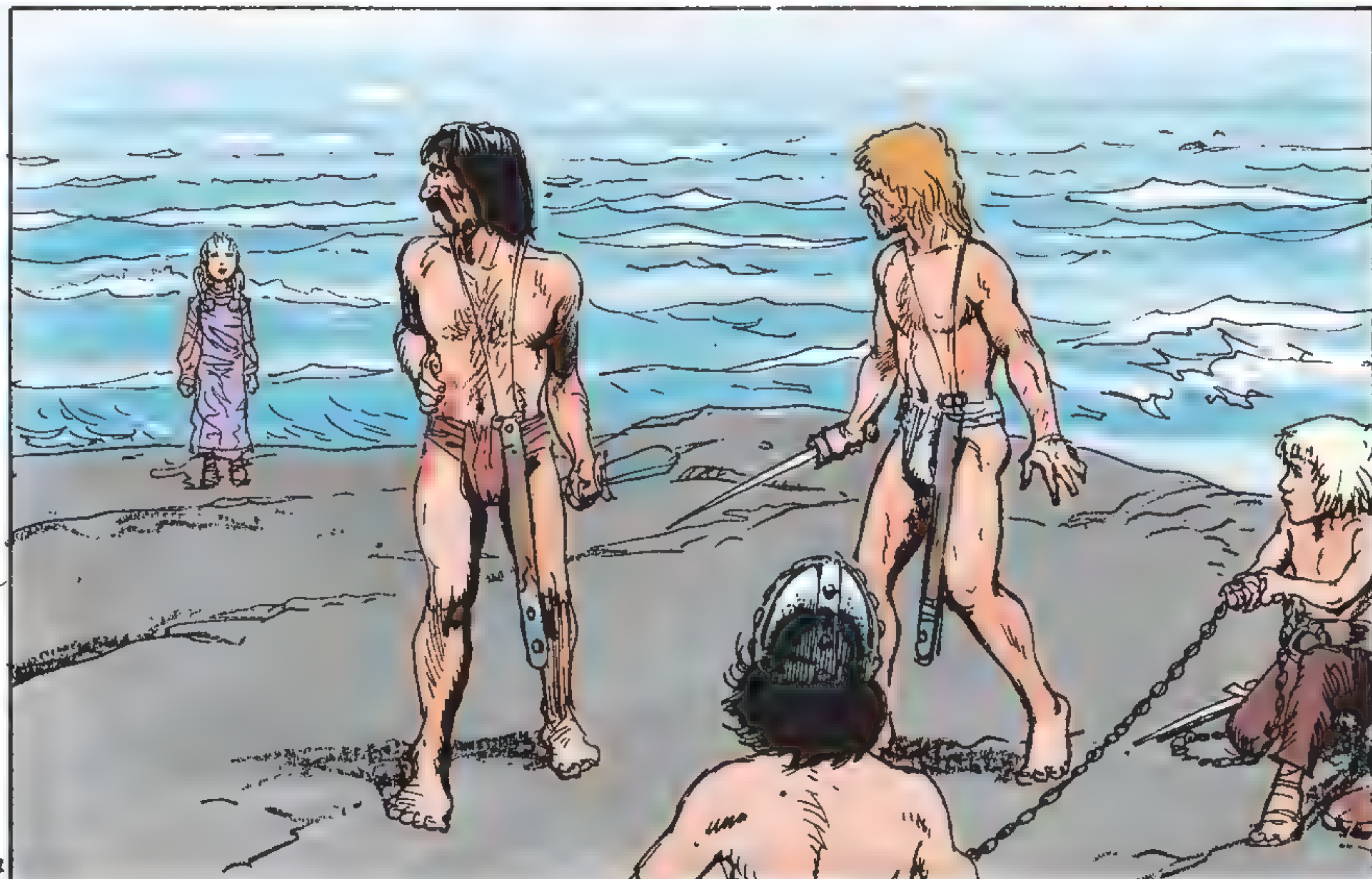
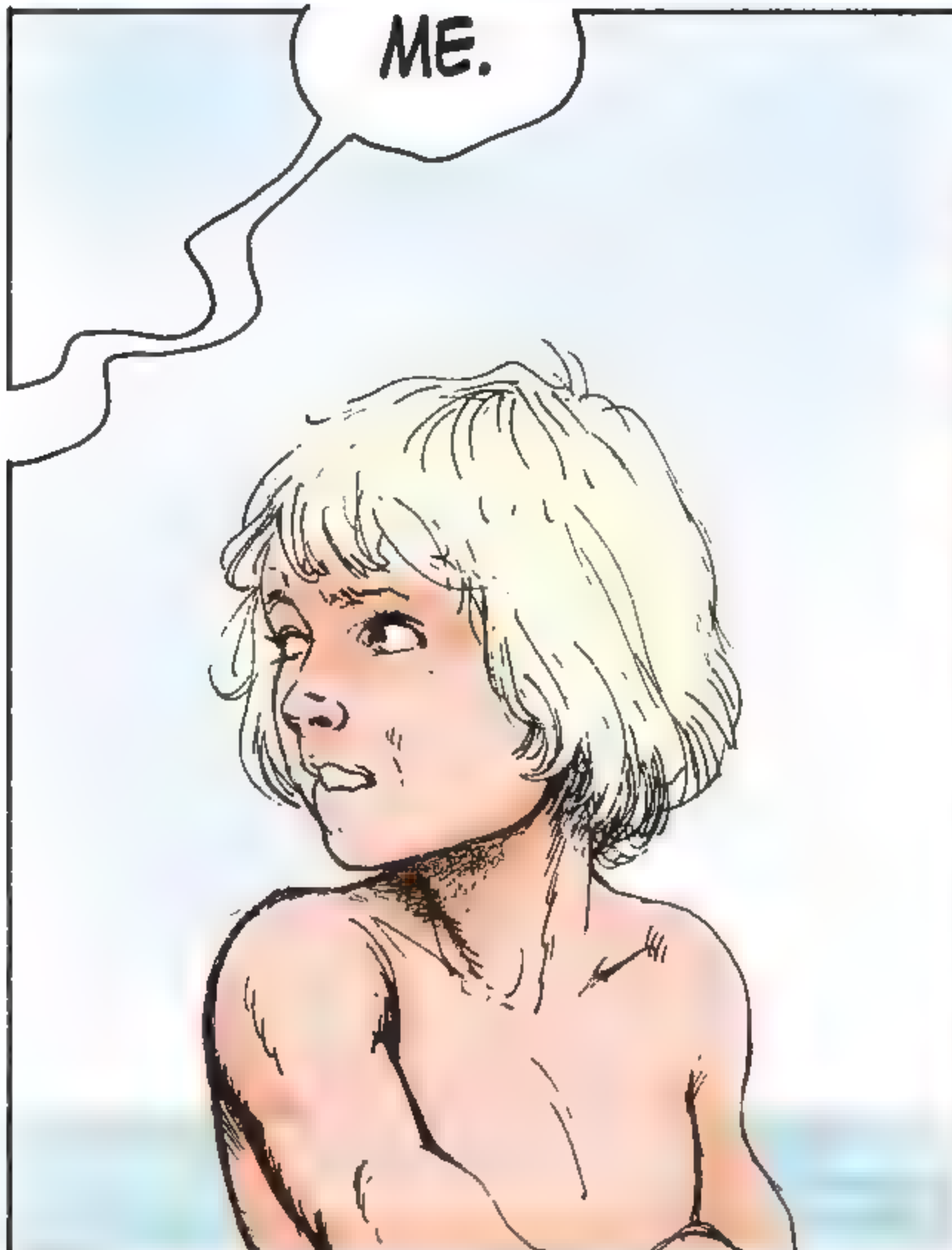
FOREIGNERS FROM OUTSIDE
THE CLAN!... YOU AND YOUR
FATHER ARE NOTHING BUT
FILTHY COWARDS! WHEN THE
"ALTHING*" HEARS ABOUT
YOUR TREACHERY...



THE ALTHING WILL NEVER
KNOW ANYTHING, POOR IDIOT.
WHO COULD CONFIRM THAT I
DIDN'T KILL YOU IN NORMAL
COMBAT?...



ME.



*NATIONAL COURT OF LAW, SUPERIOR TO THE REGIONAL COURTS (THE "THINGS") OF EACH CLAN.

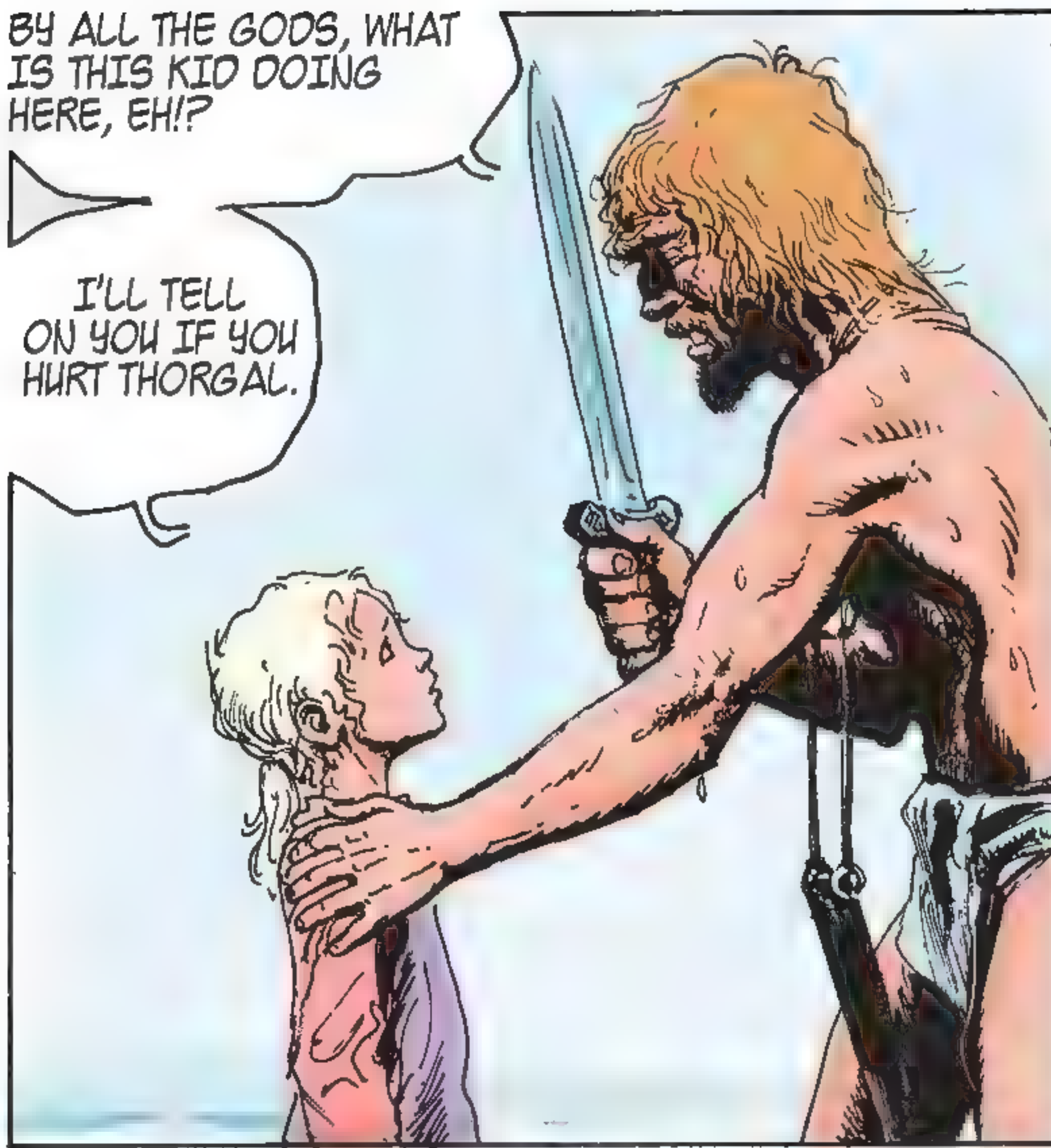
BY ALL THE GODS, WHAT IS THIS KID DOING HERE, EH!?

I'LL TELL ON YOU IF YOU HURT THORGAL.

TOO BAD FOR HER, SHE HAS TO DISAPPEAR.

NO! DON'T DO IT, THAT'S... THAT'S MY SISTER.

LET AARICIA GO RIGHT NOW, YOU BIG BRUTE!

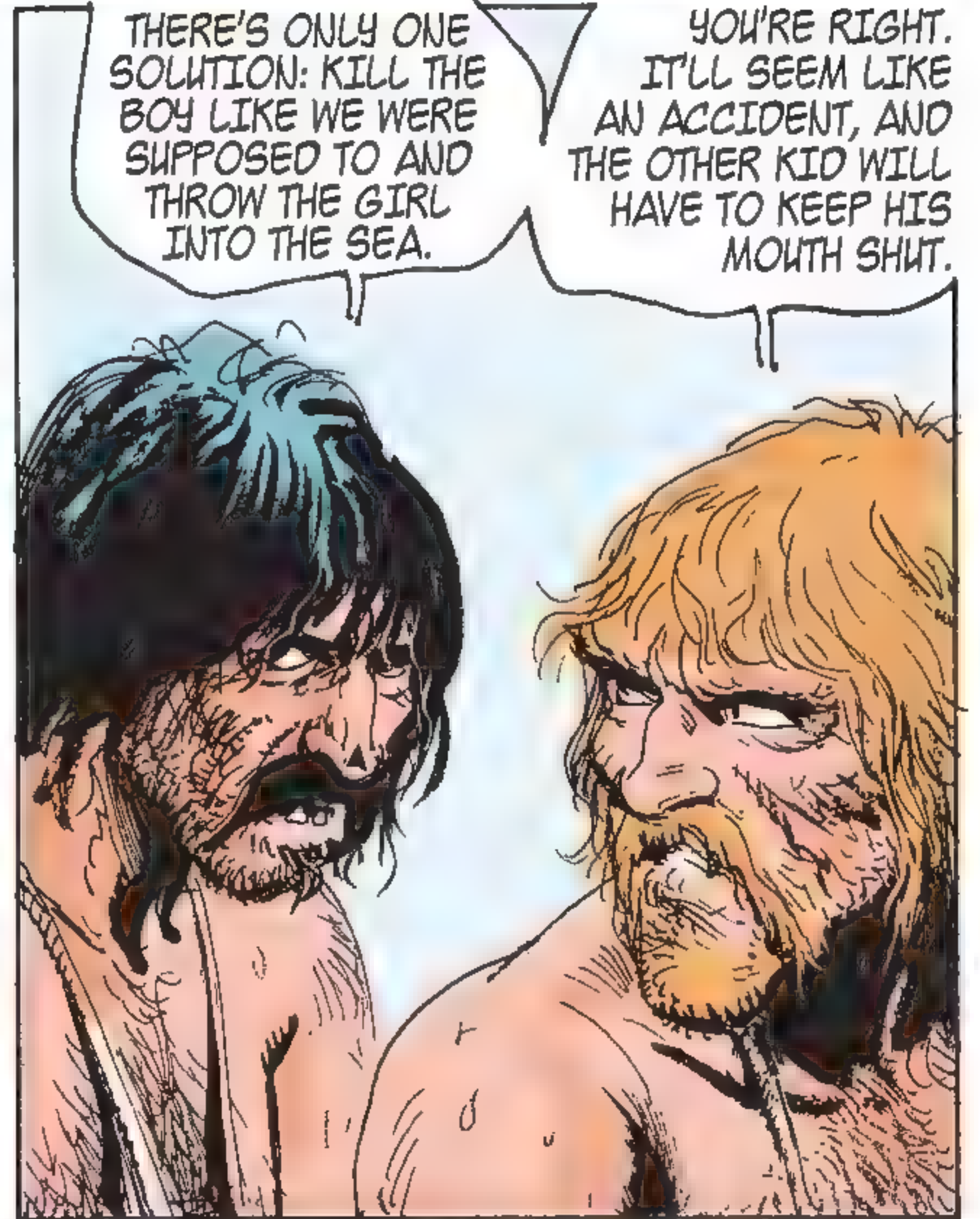
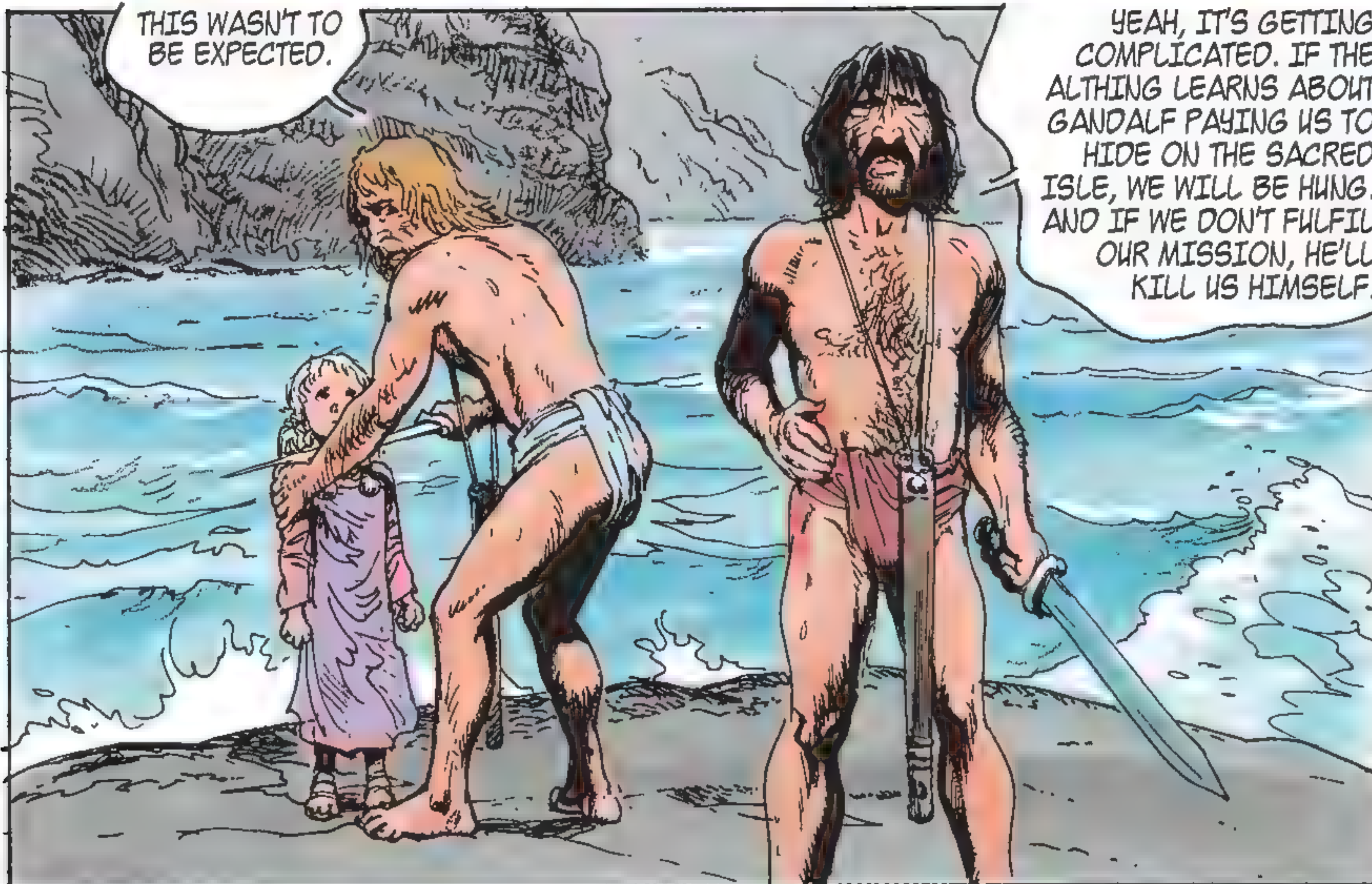


THIS WASN'T TO BE EXPECTED.

YEAH, IT'S GETTING COMPLICATED. IF THE ALTHING LEARNS ABOUT GANDALF PAYING US TO HIDE ON THE SACRED ISLE, WE WILL BE HUNG. AND IF WE DON'T FULFIL OUR MISSION, HE'LL KILL US HIMSELF.

THERE'S ONLY ONE SOLUTION: KILL THE BOY LIKE WE WERE SUPPOSED TO AND THROW THE GIRL INTO THE SEA.

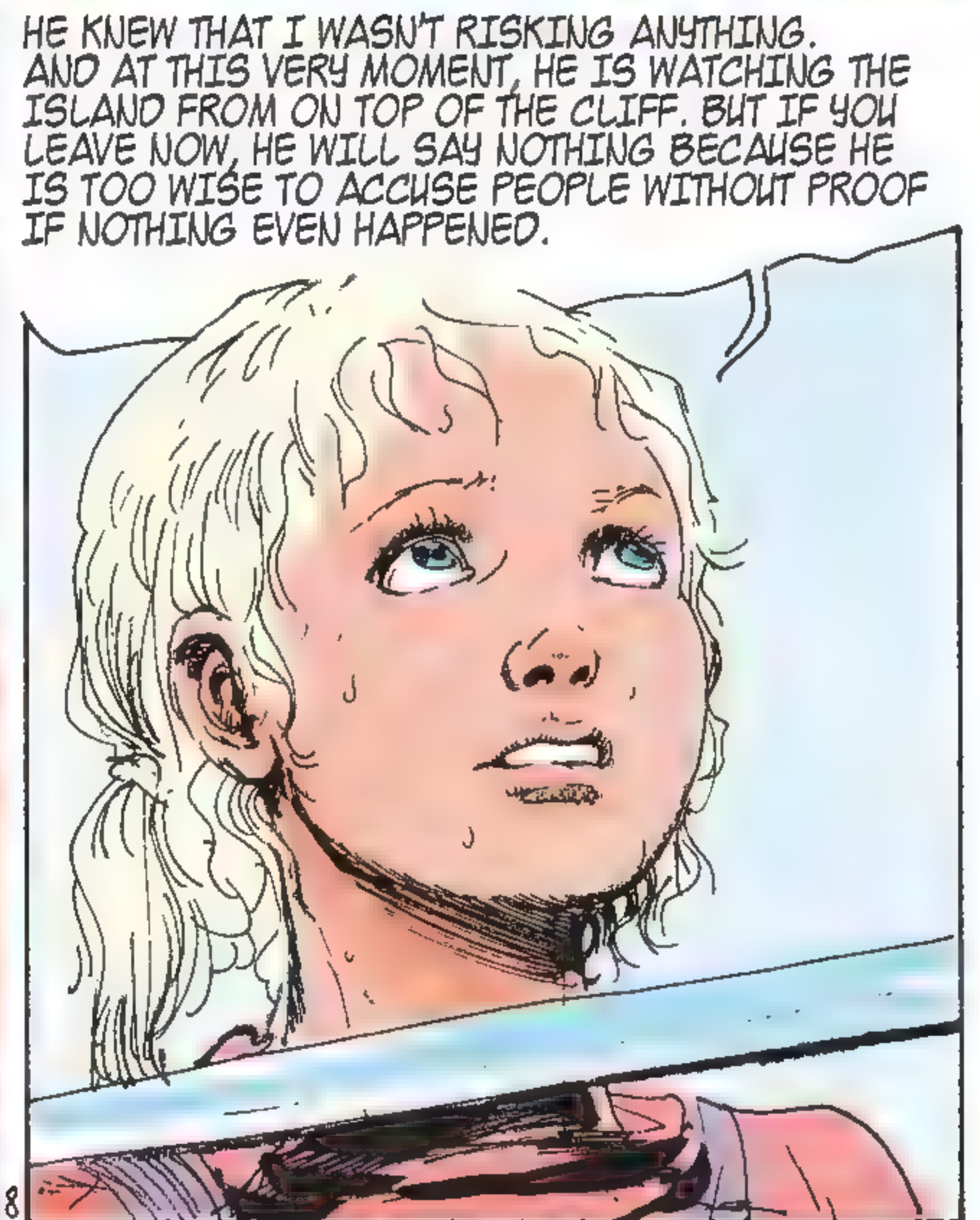
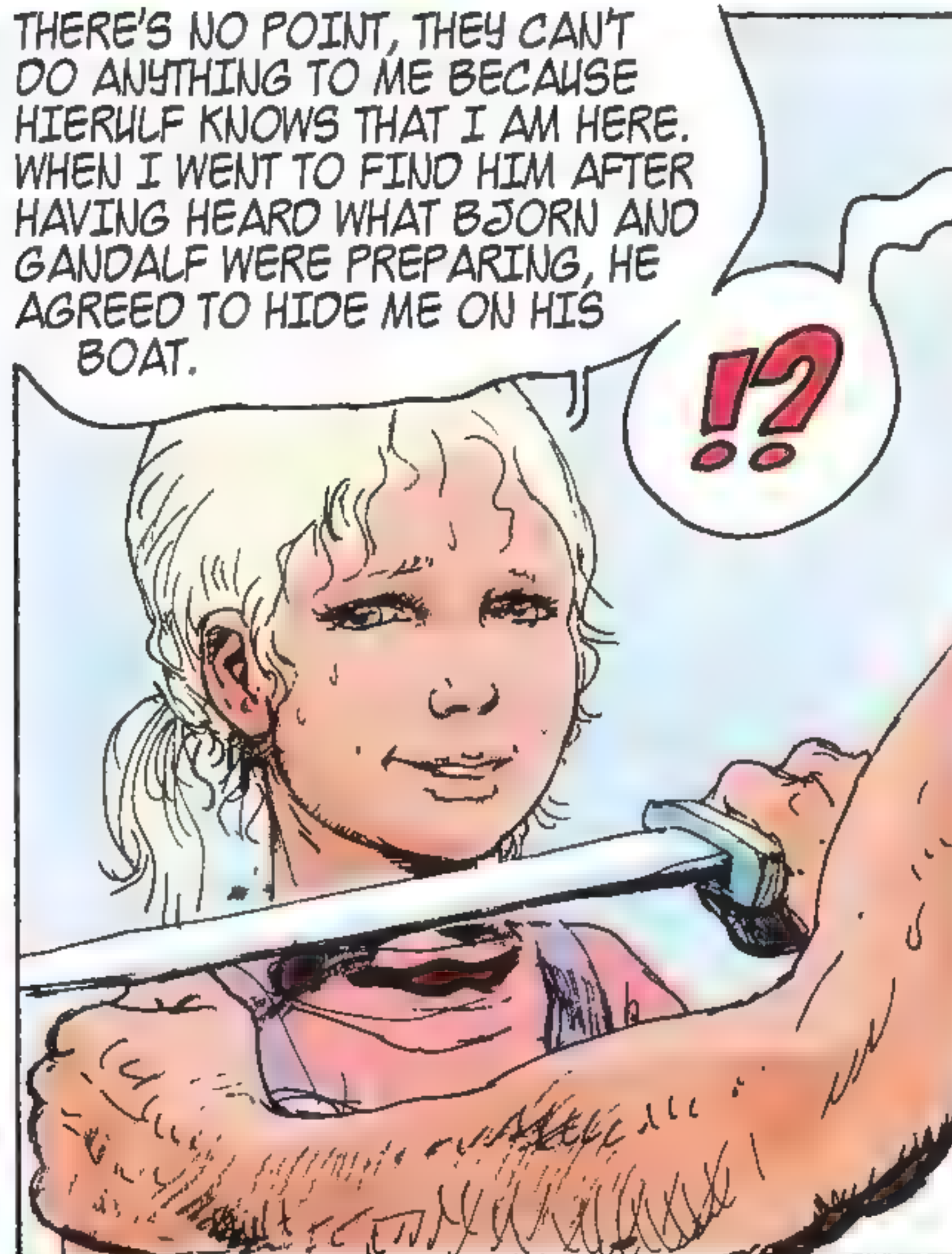
YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'LL SEEM LIKE AN ACCIDENT, AND THE OTHER KID WILL HAVE TO KEEP HIS MOUTH SHUT.



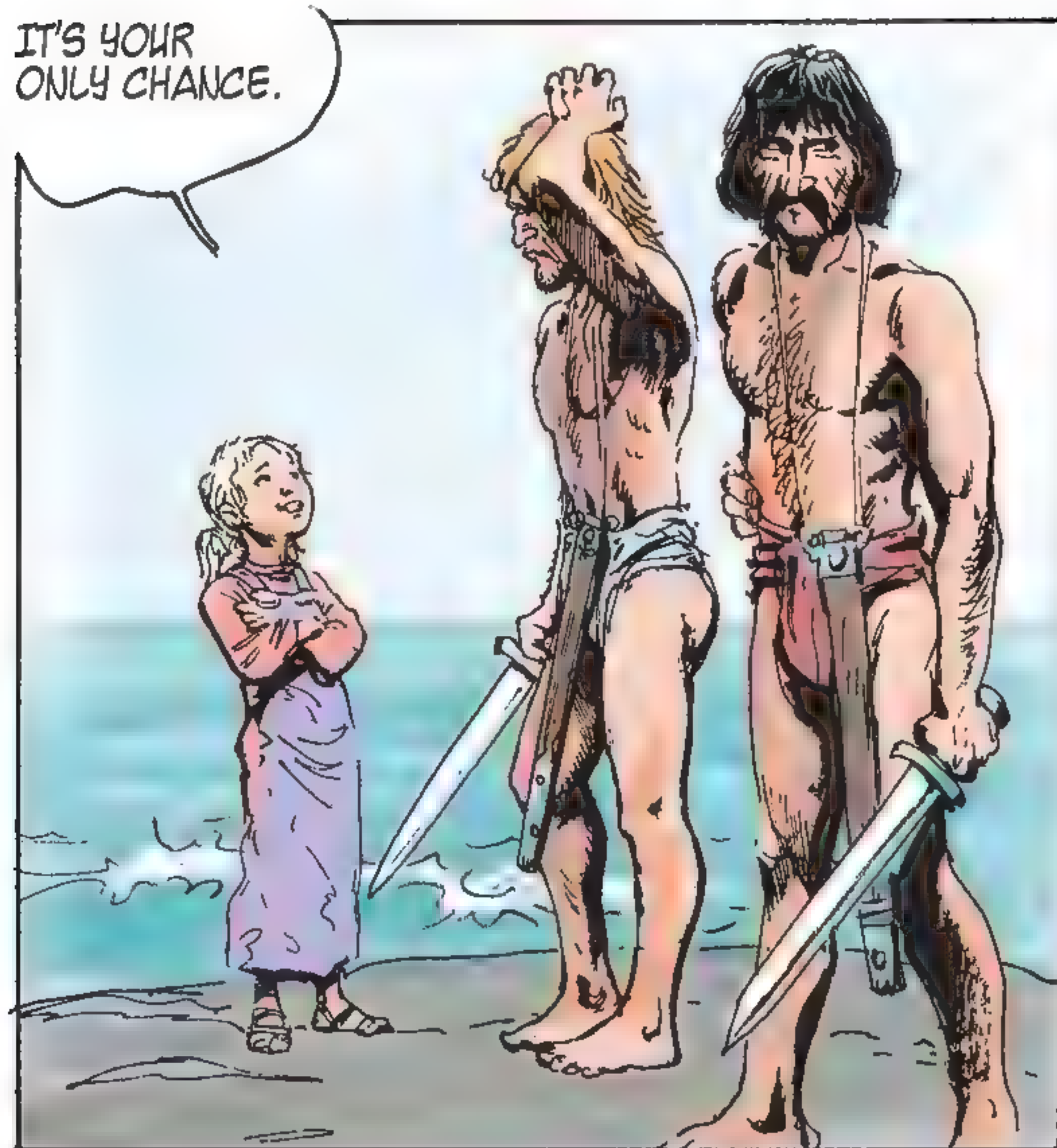
COME ON, BJORN! WE HAVE TO STOP THEM...

THERE'S NO POINT, THEY CAN'T DO ANYTHING TO ME BECAUSE HIERULF KNOWS THAT I AM HERE. WHEN I WENT TO FIND HIM AFTER HAVING HEARD WHAT BJORN AND GANDALF WERE PREPARING, HE AGREED TO HIDE ME ON HIS BOAT.

HE KNEW THAT I WASN'T RISKING ANYTHING. AND AT THIS VERY MOMENT, HE IS WATCHING THE ISLAND FROM ON TOP OF THE CLIFF. BUT IF YOU LEAVE NOW, HE WILL SAY NOTHING BECAUSE HE IS TOO WISE TO ACCUSE PEOPLE WITHOUT PROOF IF NOTHING EVEN HAPPENED.

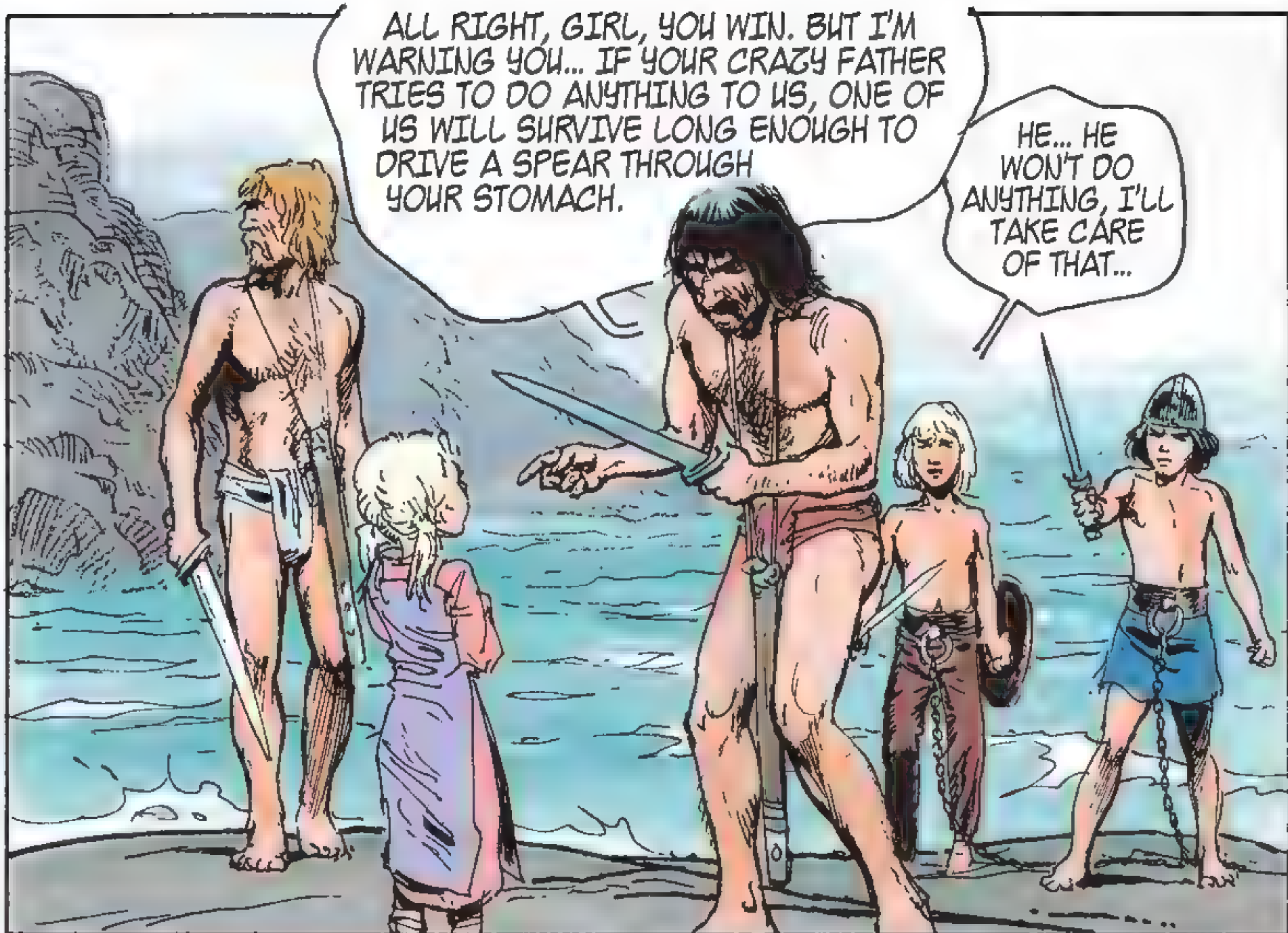


IT'S YOUR ONLY CHANCE.

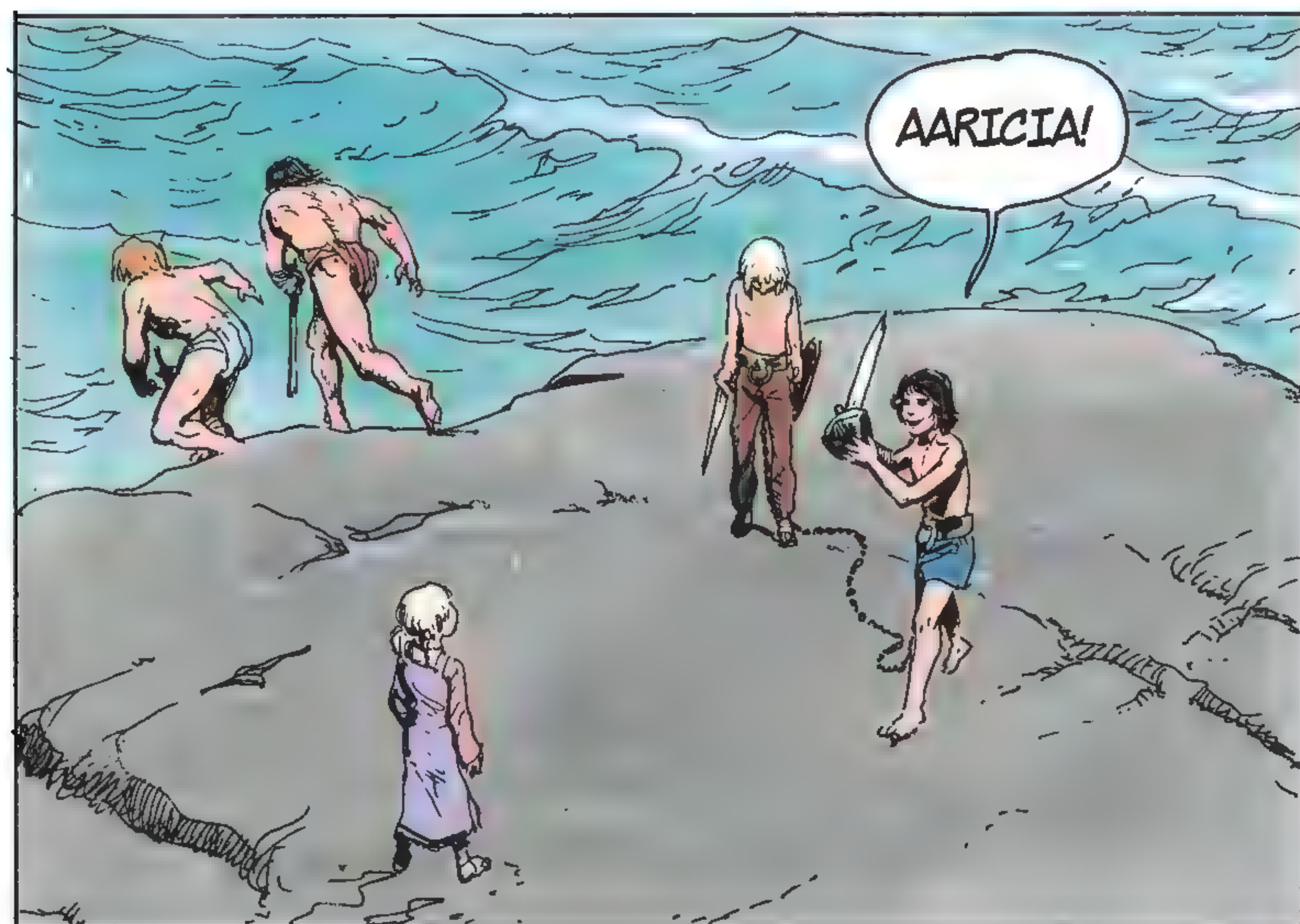


ALL RIGHT, GIRL, YOU WIN. BUT I'M WARNING YOU... IF YOUR CRAZY FATHER TRIES TO DO ANYTHING TO US, ONE OF US WILL SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO DRIVE A SPEAR THROUGH YOUR STOMACH.

HE... HE WON'T DO ANYTHING, I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT...

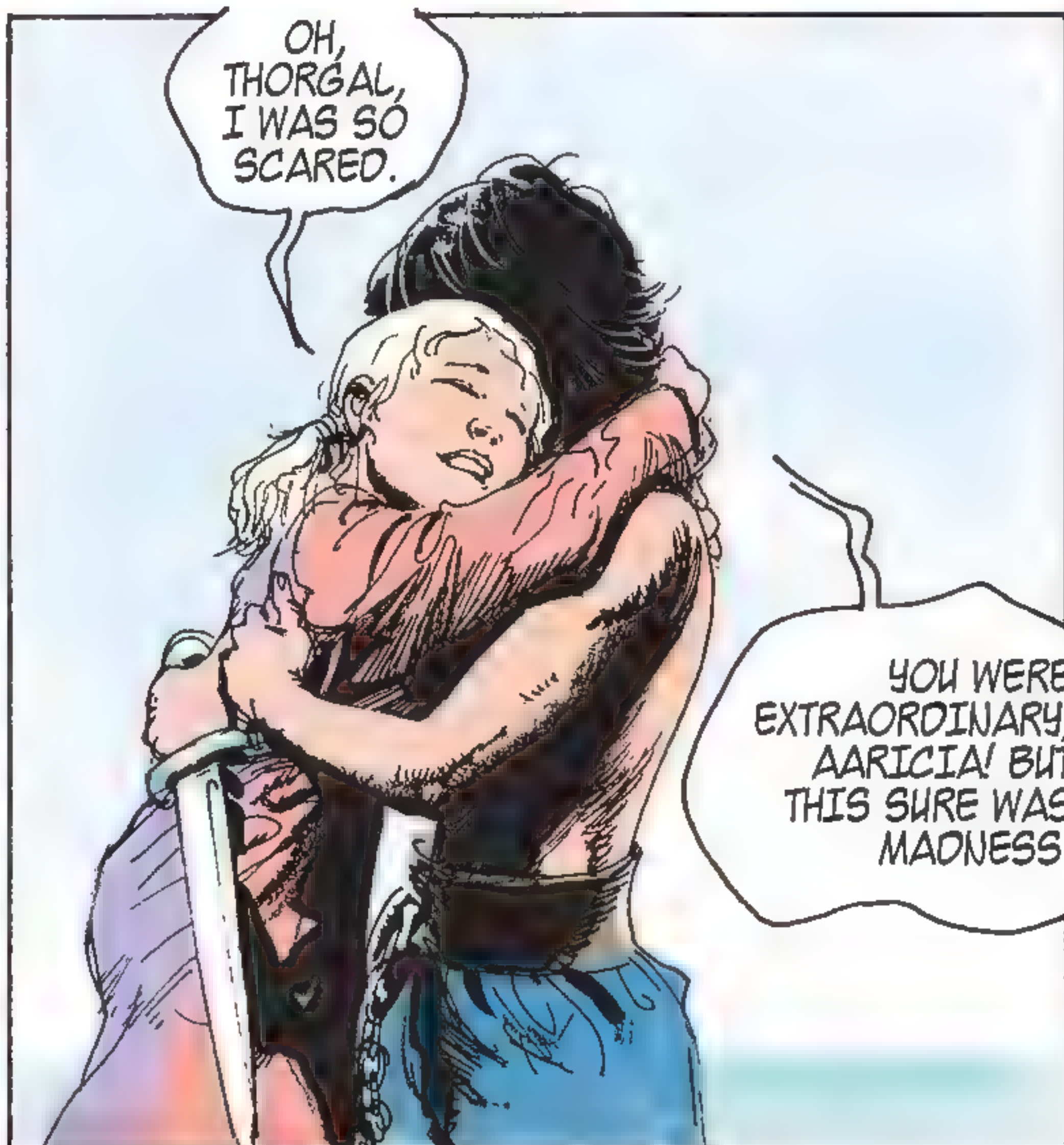


AARICIA!



OH, THORGAL, I WAS SO SCARED.

YOU WERE EXTRAORDINARY, AARICIA! BUT THIS SURE WAS MADNESS.



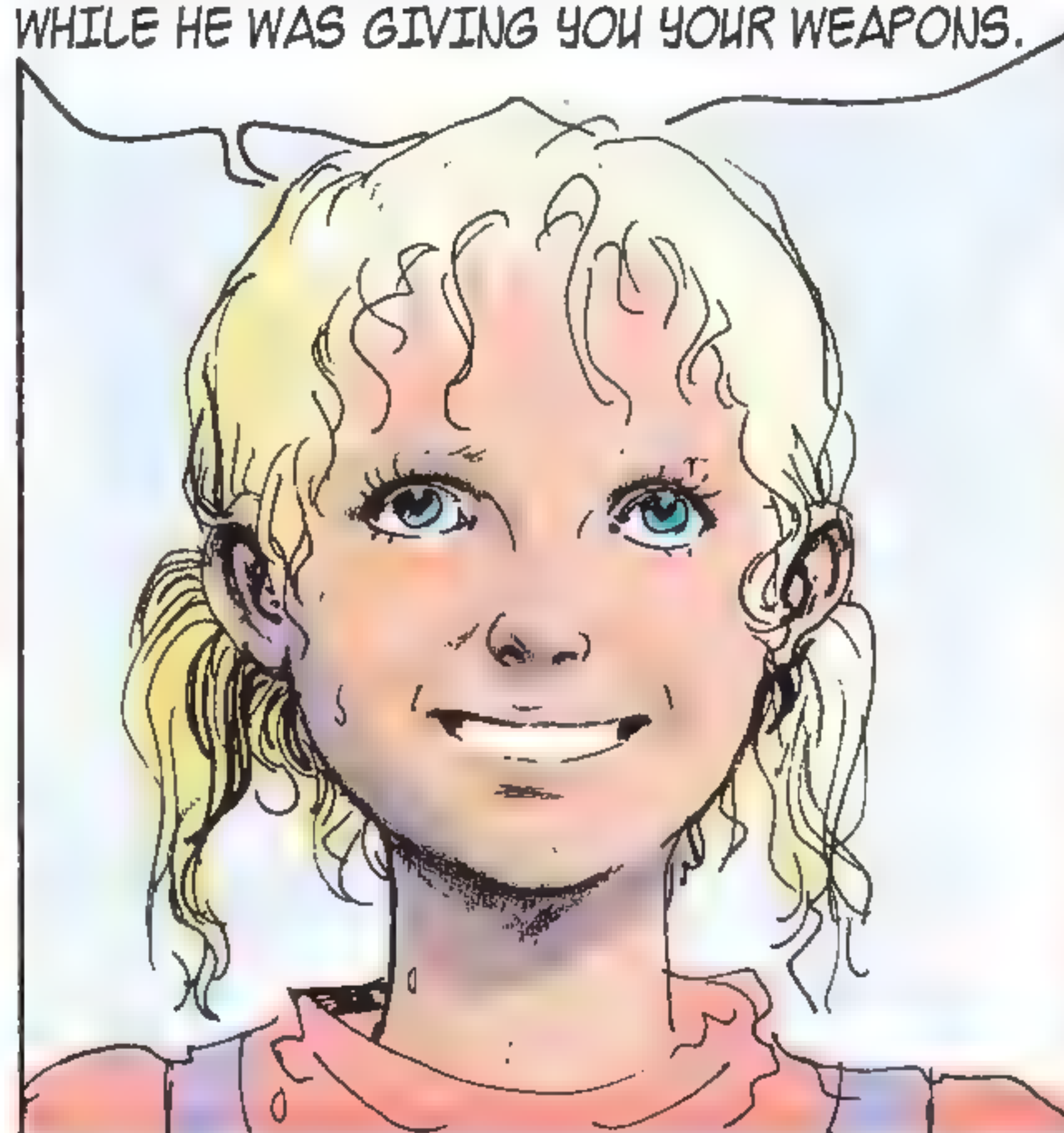
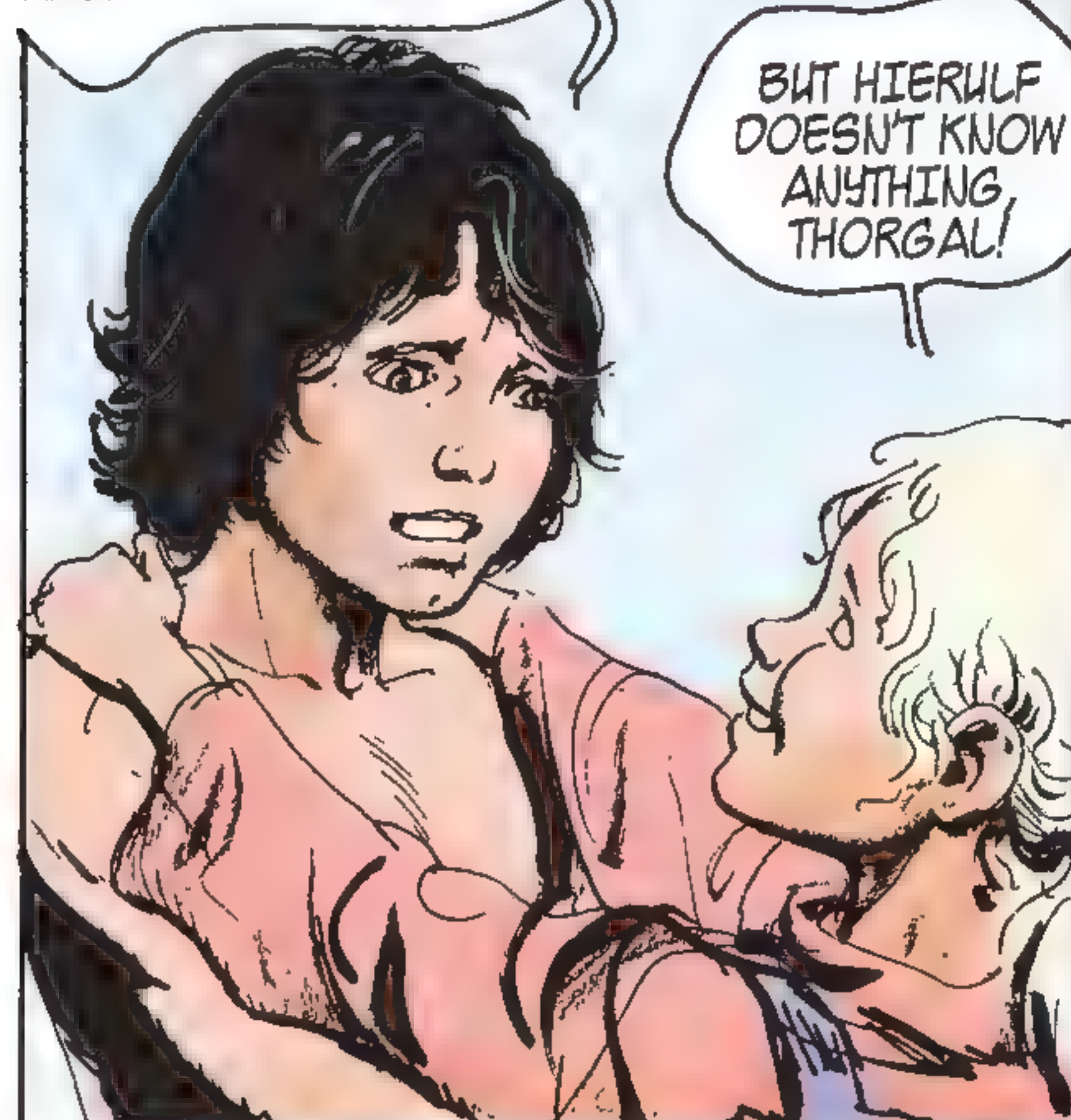
AND WHAT MADNESS FROM HIERULF, TOO! HE DIDN'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPOSE YOU TO THIS KIND OF RISK.

BUT HIERULF DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING, THORGAL!

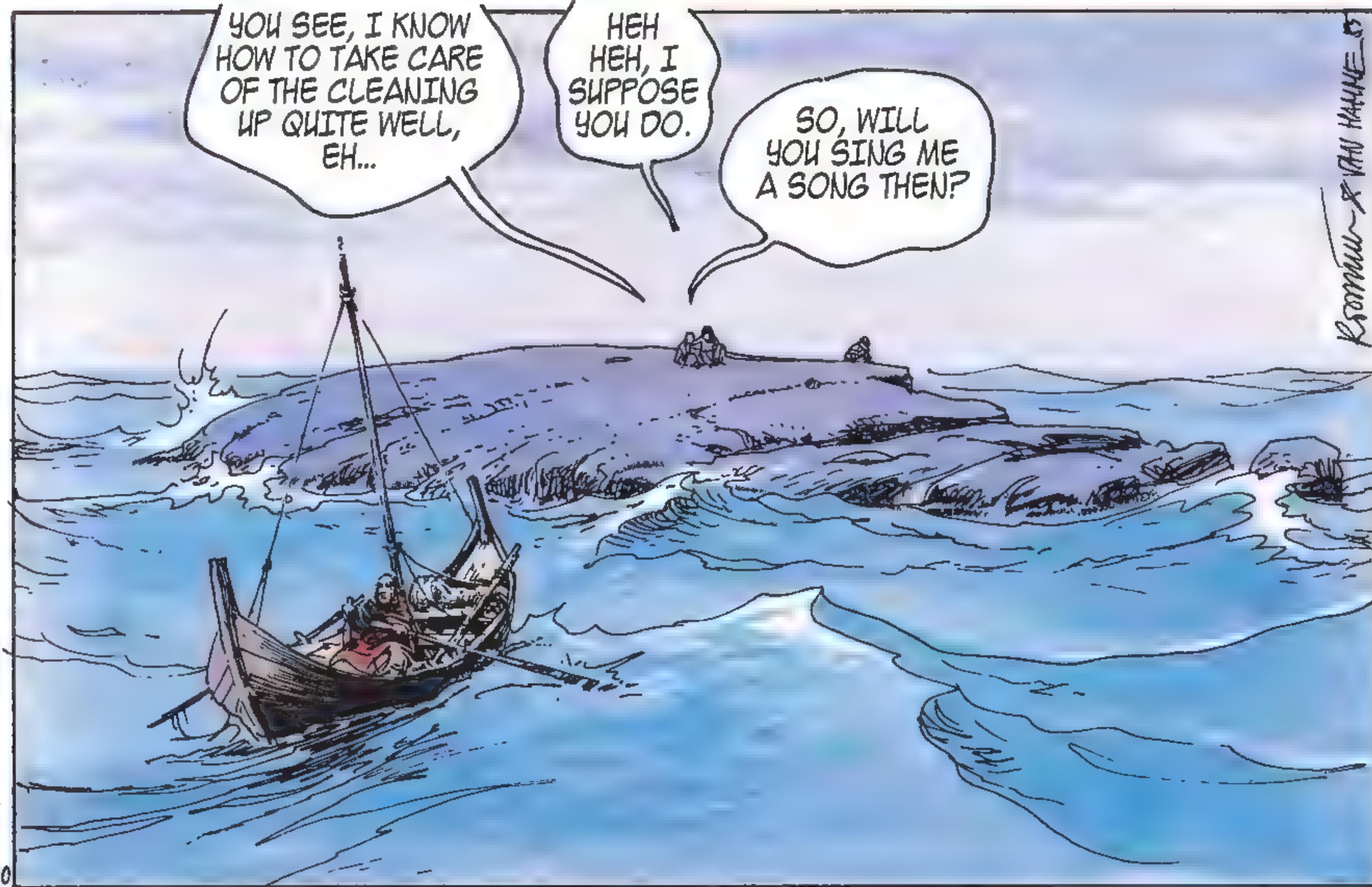
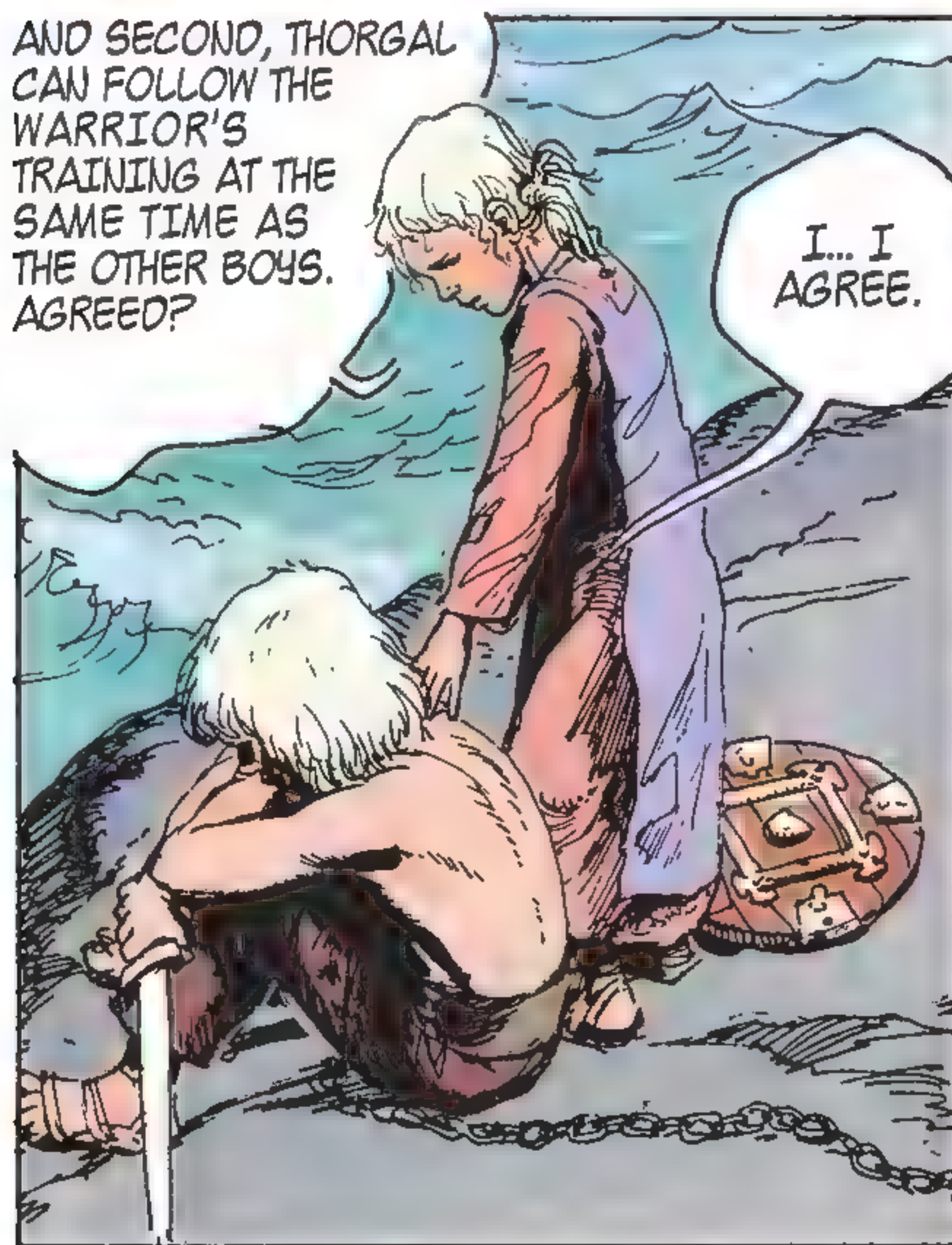
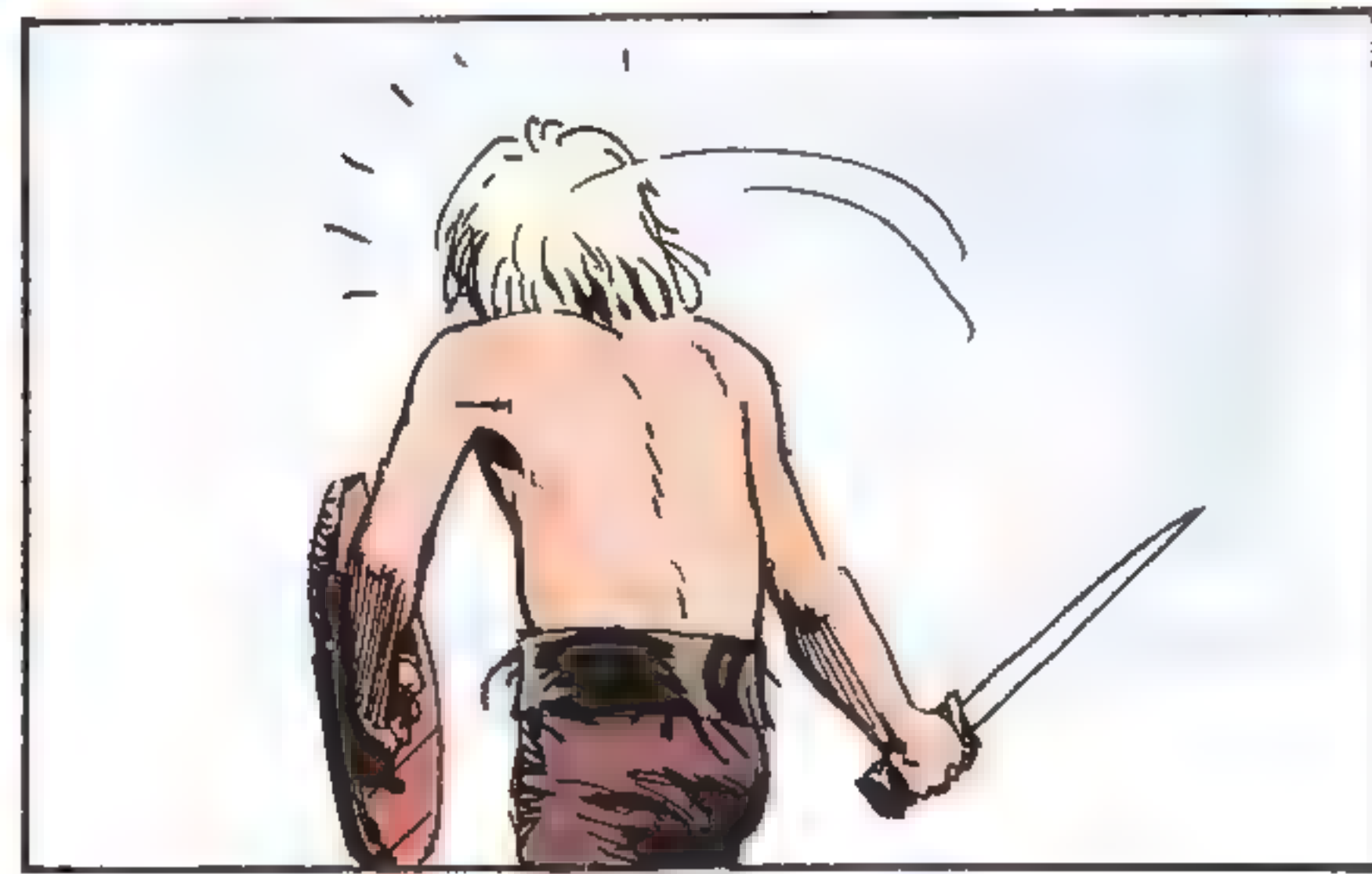
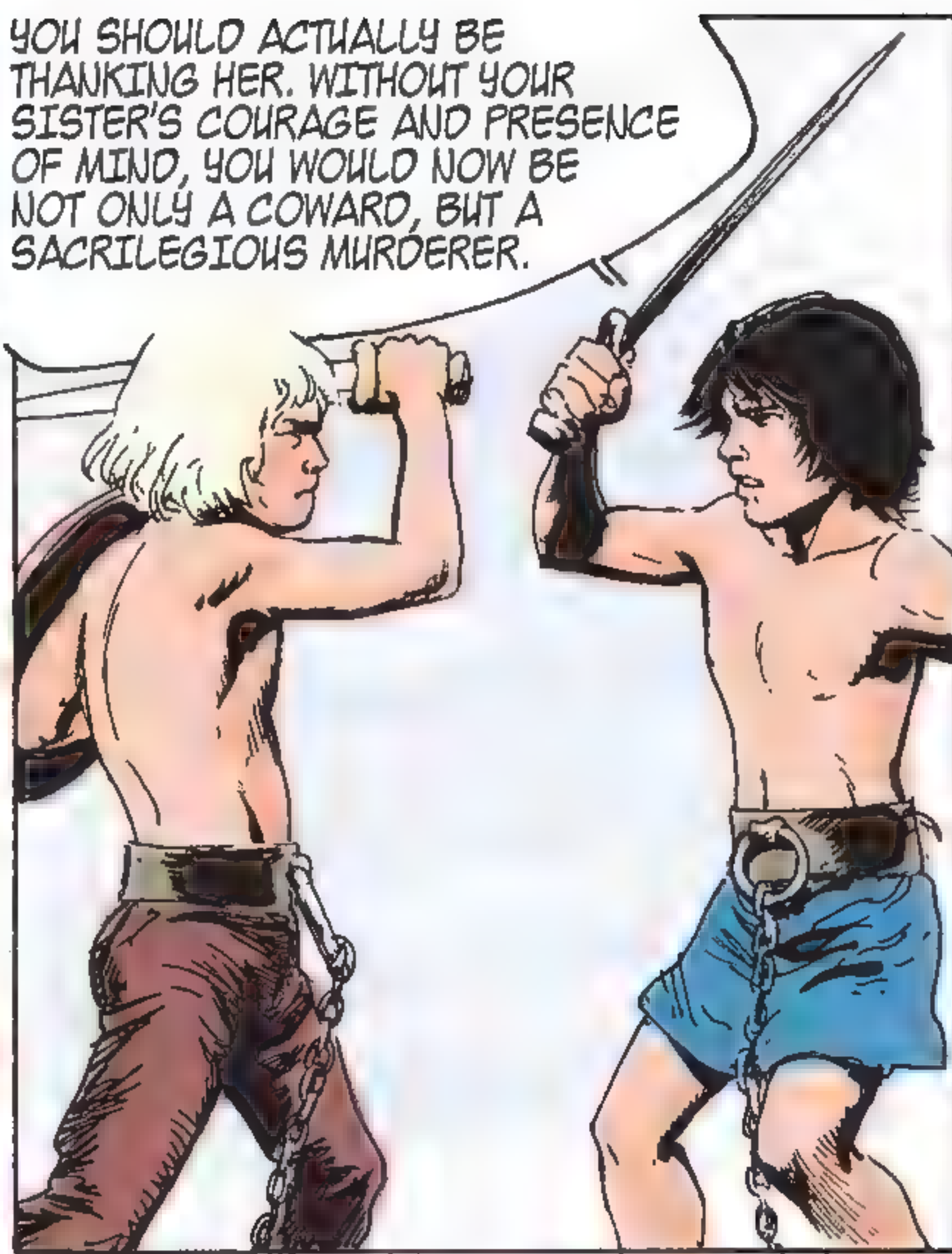
I WAS AFRAID THAT HE WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME IF I TOLD HIM WHAT I HAD HEARD. SO, JUST BEFORE DAWN I HID ON HIS BOAT UNDER THE ROLLED UP SAIL, WITHOUT HIM KNOWING. I SLIPPED INTO THE WATER WHILE HE WAS GIVING YOU YOUR WEAPONS.

DO... DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT COULD...

BAH, THOSE TWO MEN WERE VERY STUPID. AND ANYWAY, IF I'M GOING TO MARRY YOU ONE DAY, YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY ALIVE, RIGHT?



YOU DIRTY LITTLE WENCH!



TJAHZI'S TEARS

AT THE HEAD OF THE GODS OF ASGARD, THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM OF GREAT ODIN, CAME THE MAJOR DIVINITIES, THOSE FOR WHOM THE NORTHERN MEN SANG OF, THEIR HEROIC DEEDS AND THEIR TUMULTUOUS LOVES.

OF COURSE THERE WAS ODIN AND THE POWERFUL GODDESS FRIGG. THOR AND SIF, HIS WIFE. HIEMDAL, LOKI, BALDER, TYR, IDUN AND MORE.

BUT THERE WERE ALSO SOME MORE OBSCURE GODS, THOSE WHOM THE MORTALS ONLY RARELY CALLED OUT TO BY NAME.

AND AMONG THOSE, ONE OF THE LEAST WELL KNOWN WAS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE YOUNG VIGRID.

VIGRID WAS A POET GOD, A GENTLE DREAMER; NEVER HAVING TOUCHED A BOW OR A SWORD, HE ASPIRED TO ACCOMPLISH A FEAT THAT WOULD ESTABLISH HIS RENOWN IN THE VERY MEMORY OF THE WORLD.

AND THIS IS HOW, ONE DAY, AS HIS ANCESTORS HAD ONCE DONE, HE RESOLVED TO TRAVEL TO MIDGARD, THE "MIDDLE EARTH" WHERE HUMANS LIVED.

LEAVING ASGARD BY THE HORIZON GATE, WHERE THE SKY AND THE SEA MEET, HE HEADED FOR ADVENTURE, HIS HEAD FULL OF AMBITIOUS PROJECTS.

BUT HE DIDN'T
GET FAR. WHILE HE
WAS CROSSING THE
ICED CONFINES OF THE
NORTH, HE WAS CAPTURED
BY THE GIANT HRUN,
THE UNDISPUTED
MASTER OF THE
ICE FIELDS.

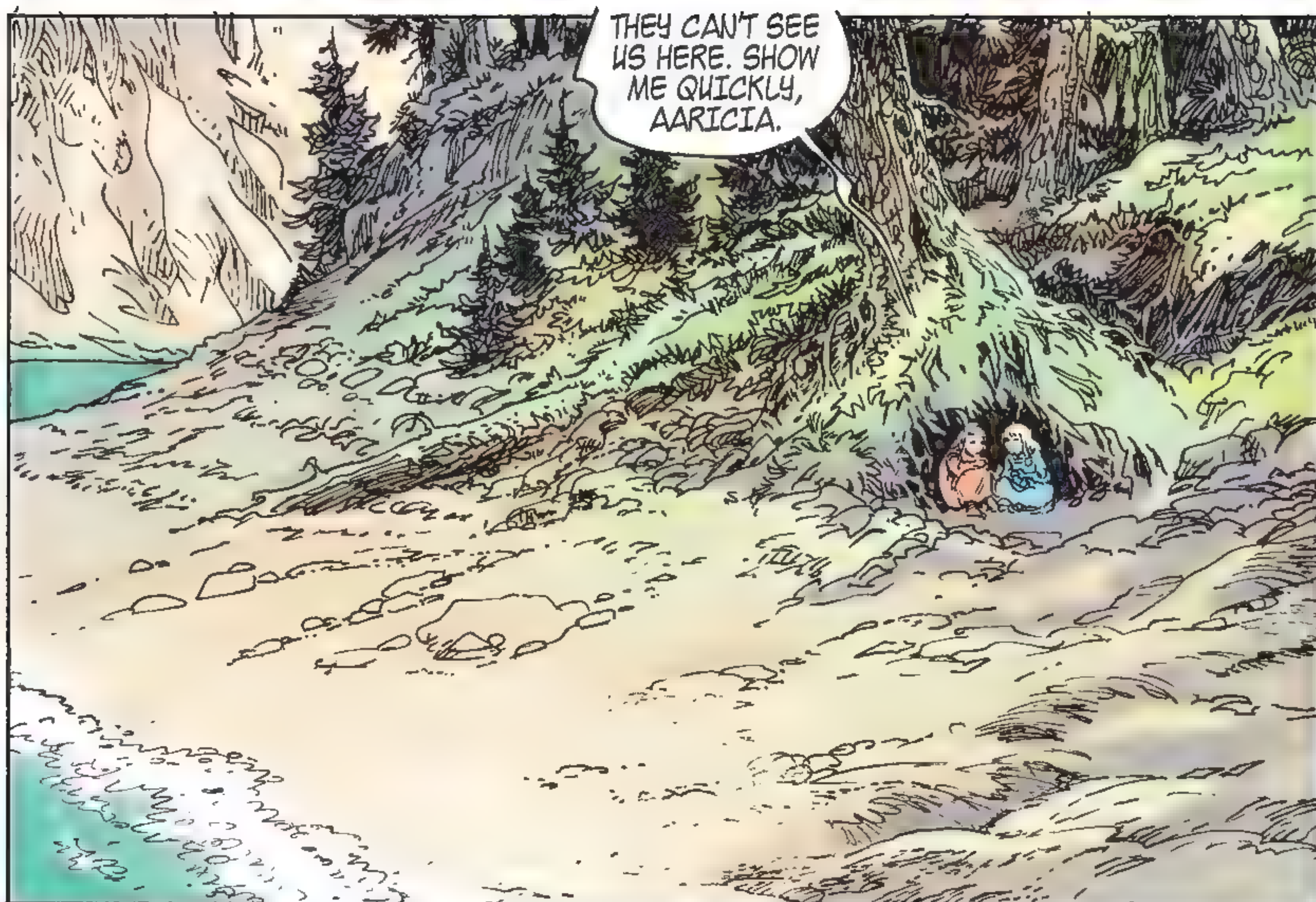
PREVIOUSLY
EXILED BY ODIN
TO THESE DESOLATE PLACES,
HRUN HAD SINCE FED HIS DEADLY
HATRED TOWARDS THE INHABITANTS
OF ASGARD.

BUT HE REALISED THAT HE'D ONLY
CAUGHT A SMALL PRIZE HERE.
WHAT SATISFACTION COULD
THERE BE IN CAPTURING
A LITTLE GOD OF SUCH
SMALL RENOWN?

NOT WANTING TO KILL
HIM, HE BLEW ONTO
HIS FACE A BREATH
COLDER THAN ANY
BREATH EVER KNOWN.

AND VIGRID'S
EYES FROZE
OVER.

HIS CRUELTY NOW SATISFIED, THE GIANT
ABANDONED HIS VICTIM IN THE ICY WATERS.
DEPRIVED OF SIGHT, THE UNLUCKY VIGRID
WOULD BE UNABLE TO FIND HIS WAY BACK
TO ASGARD AND WOULD ETERNALLY ROAM
MIDDLE EARTH.



THEY CAN'T SEE US HERE. SHOW ME QUICKLY, AARICIA.

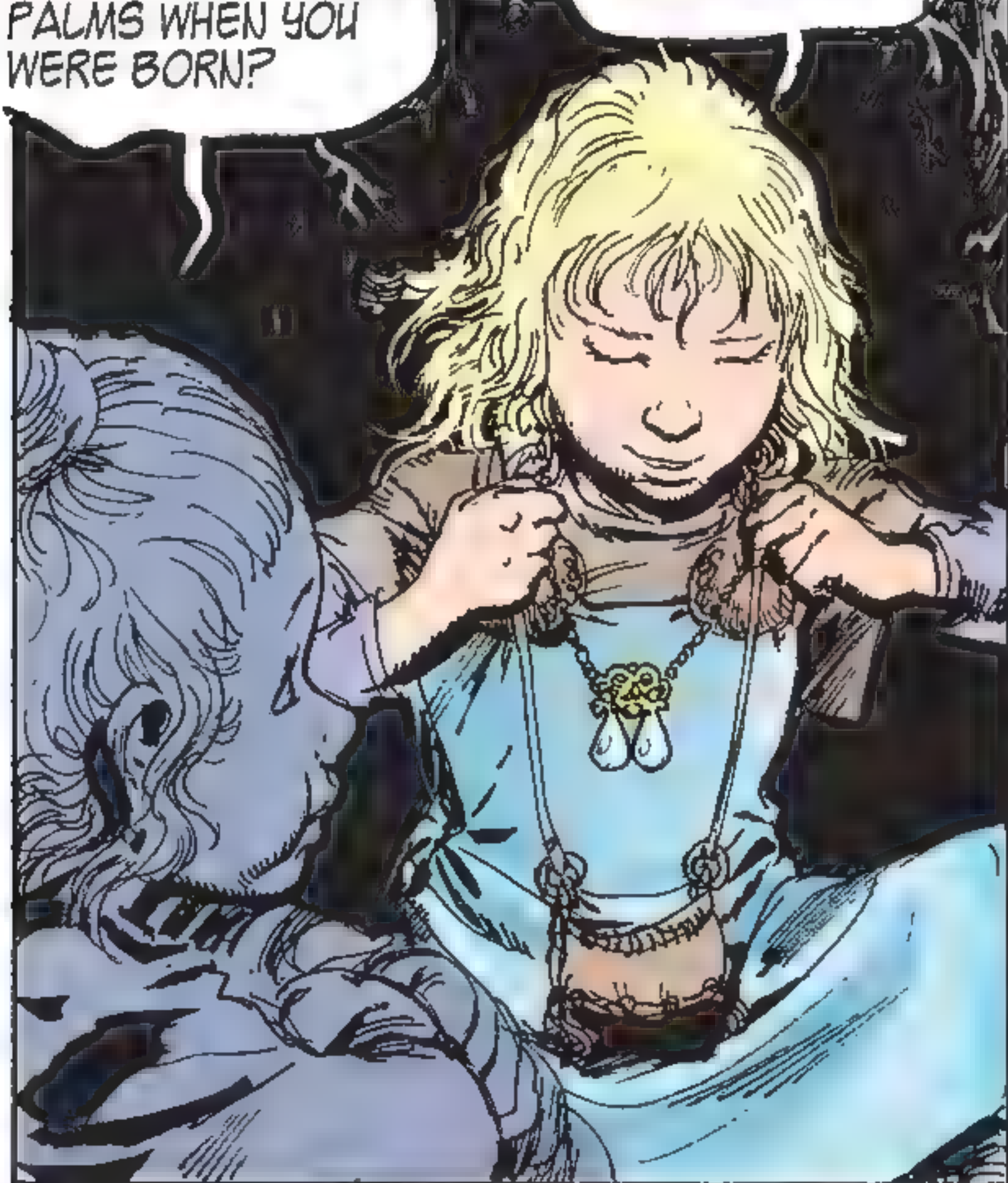
OH THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL! AND SO STRANGE... TRANSPARENT LIKE DROPS OF SPRING WATER...

MY FATHER WOULD BE FURIOUS IF HE KNEW THAT I HAD TAKEN THEM FROM THEIR HIDING PLACE TO SHOW YOU.



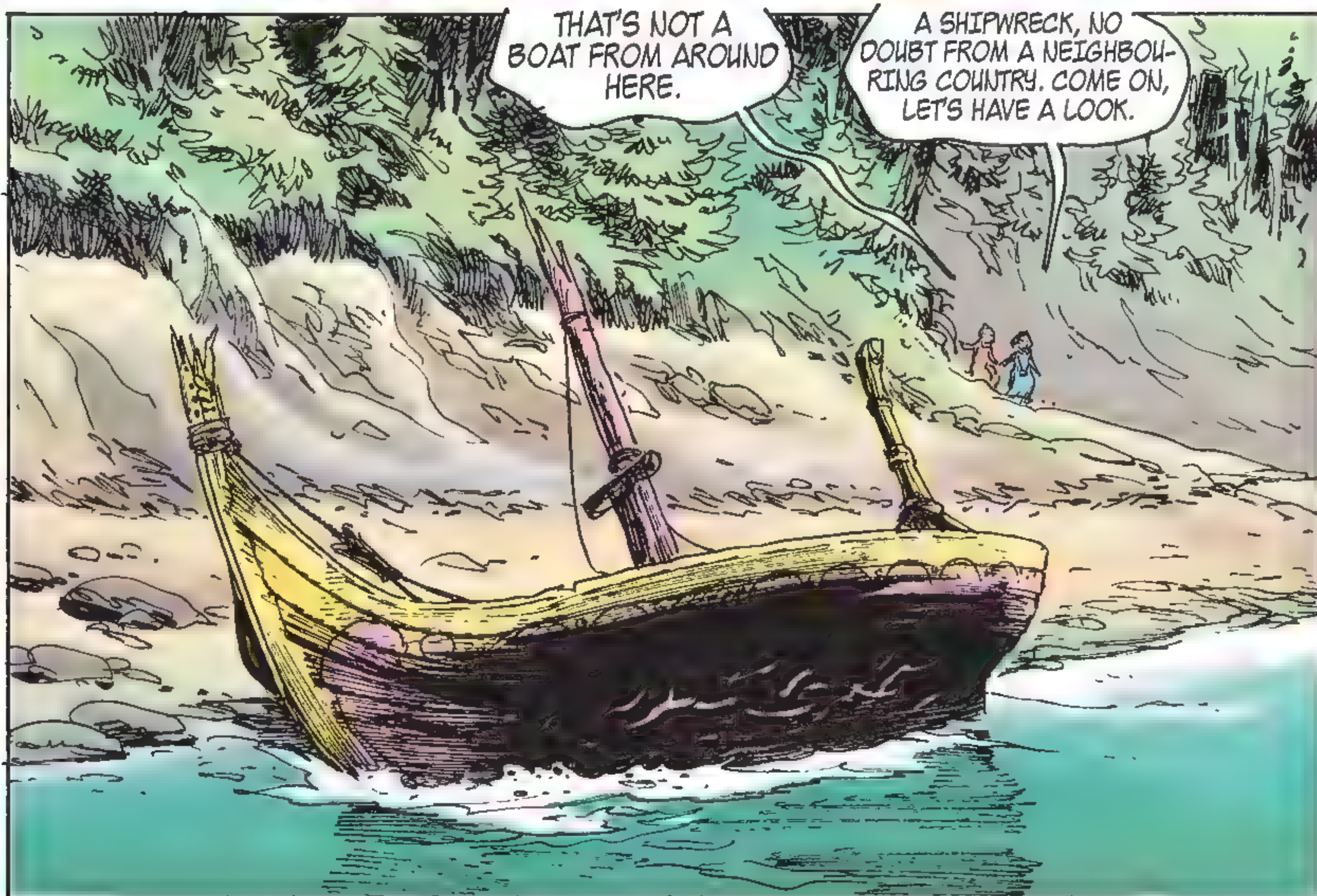
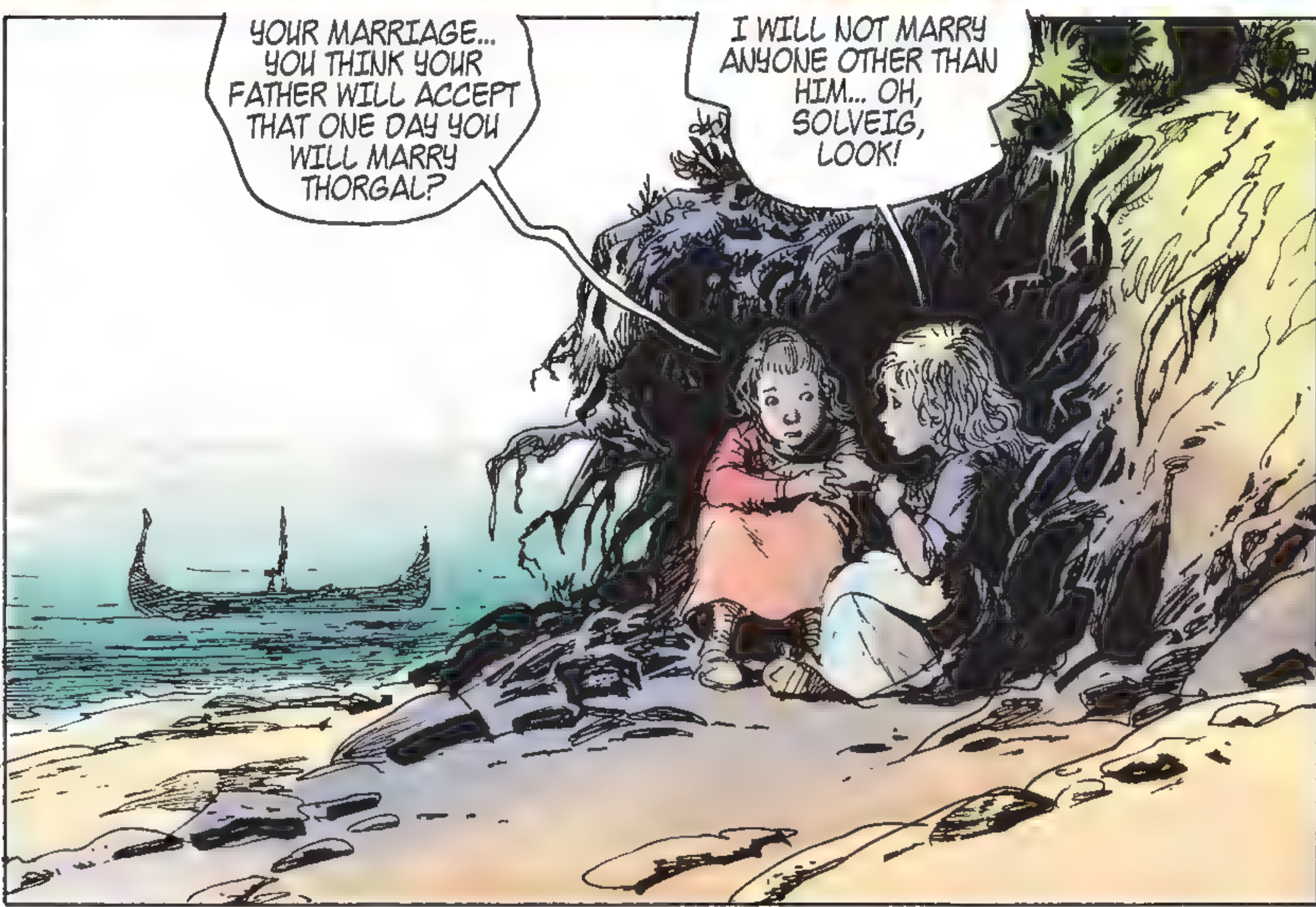
BUT THESE PEARLS ARE YOURS. DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT THEY WERE IN YOUR PALMS WHEN YOU WERE BORN?

THAT'S TRUE. BUT GANDALF REFUSES TO LET ME WEAR THEM BEFORE MY MARRIAGE DAY.



YOUR MARRIAGE... YOU THINK YOUR FATHER WILL ACCEPT THAT ONE DAY YOU WILL MARRY THORGAL?

I WILL NOT MARRY ANYONE OTHER THAN HIM... OH, SOLVEIG, LOOK!

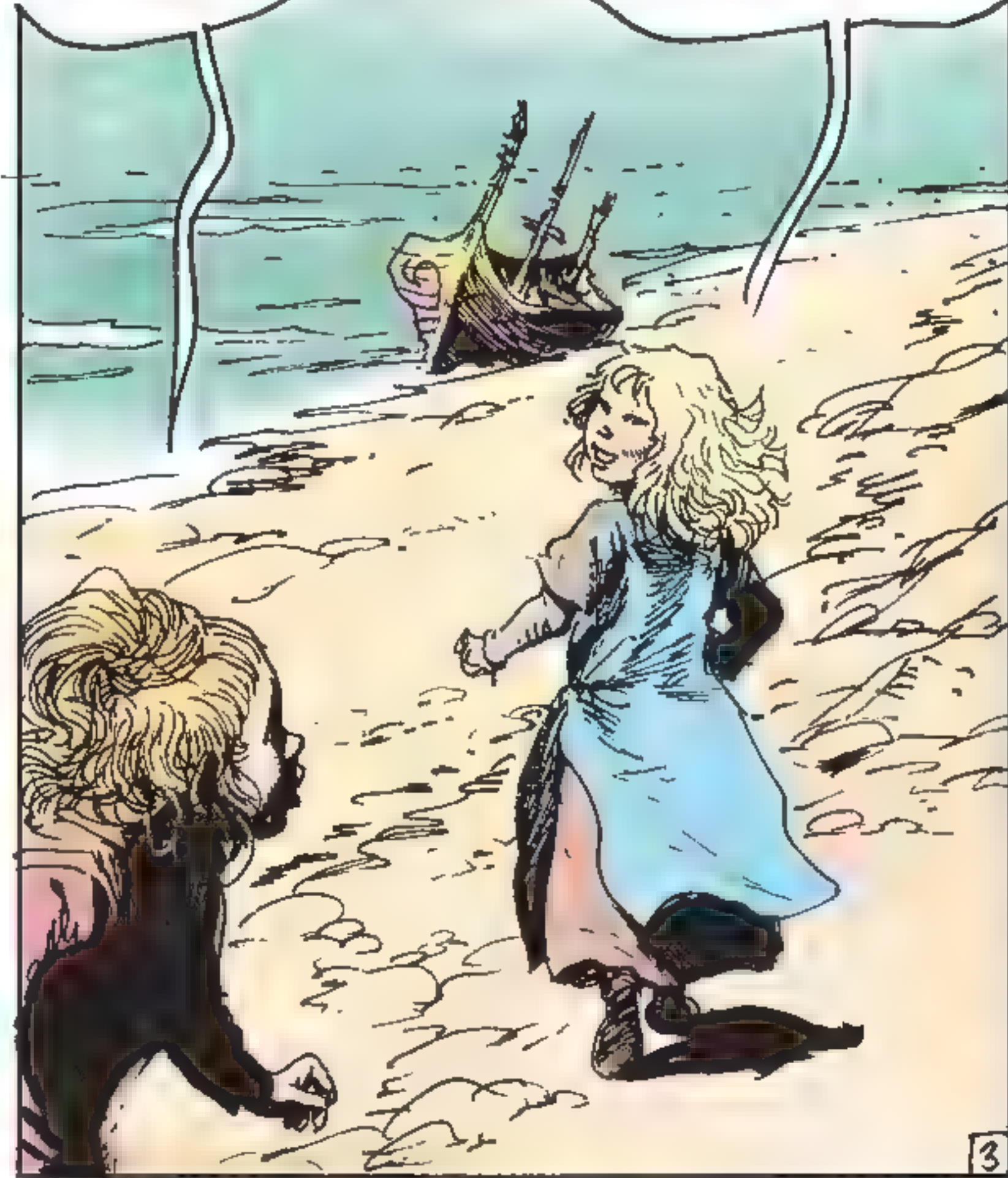


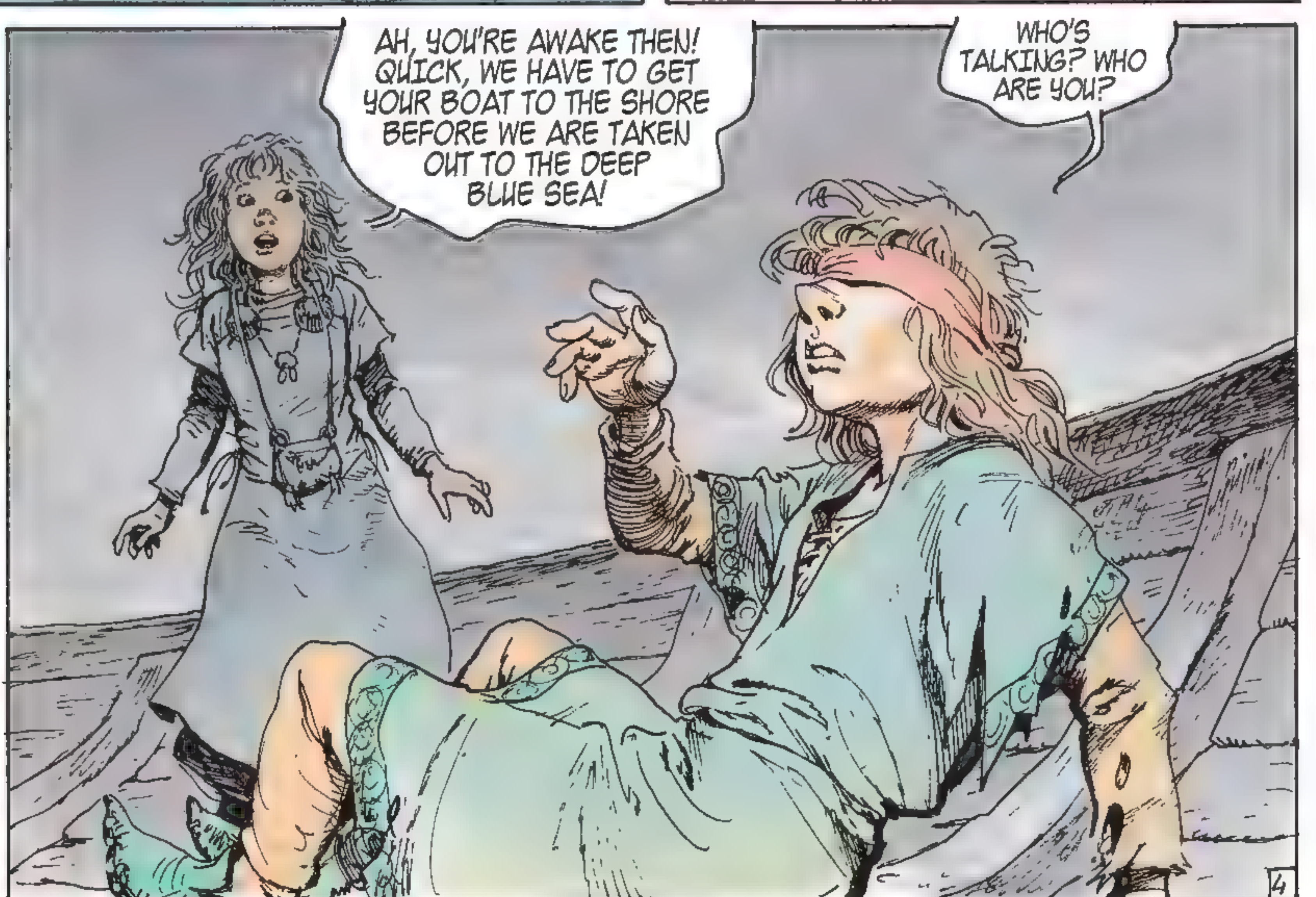
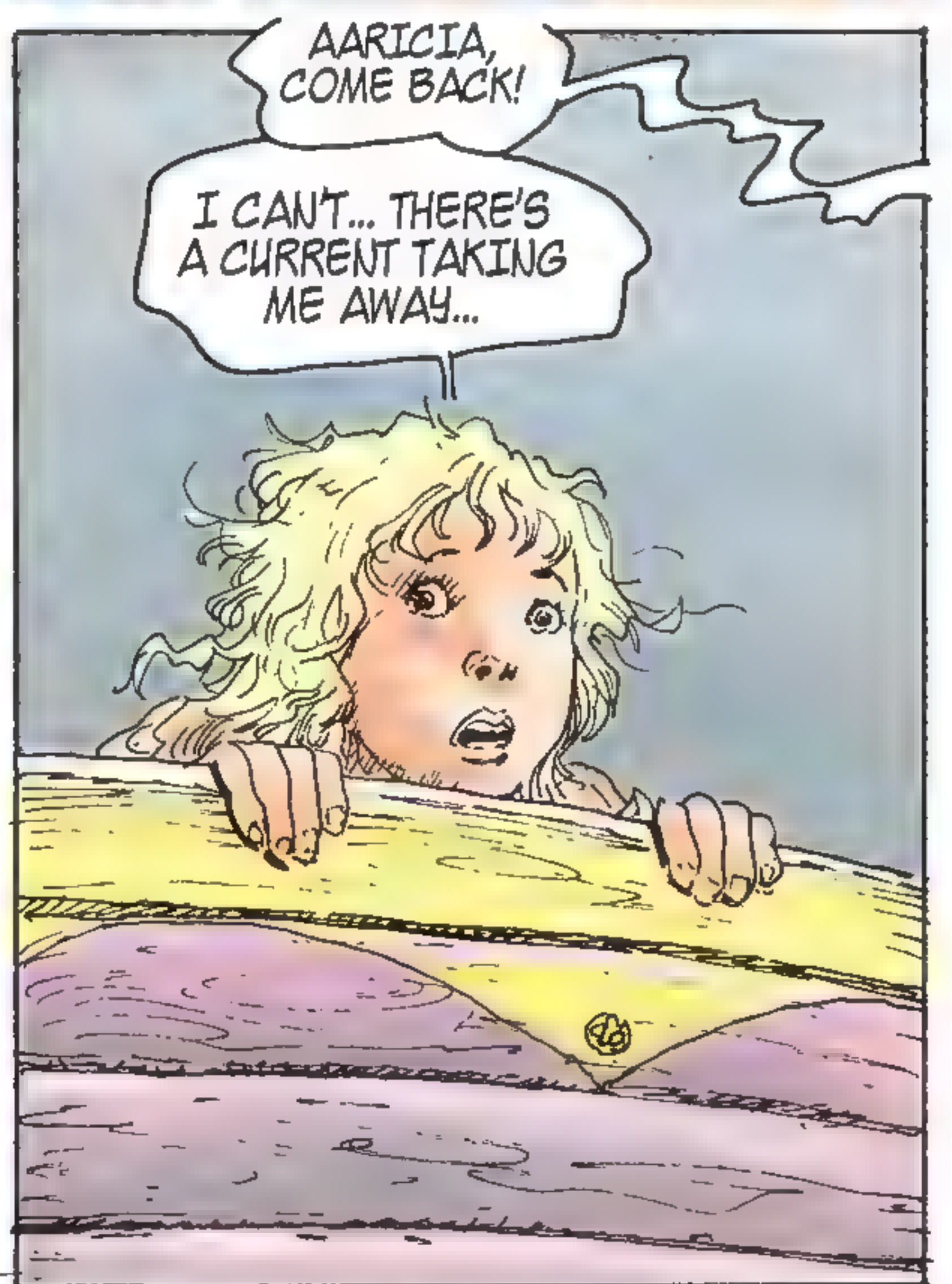
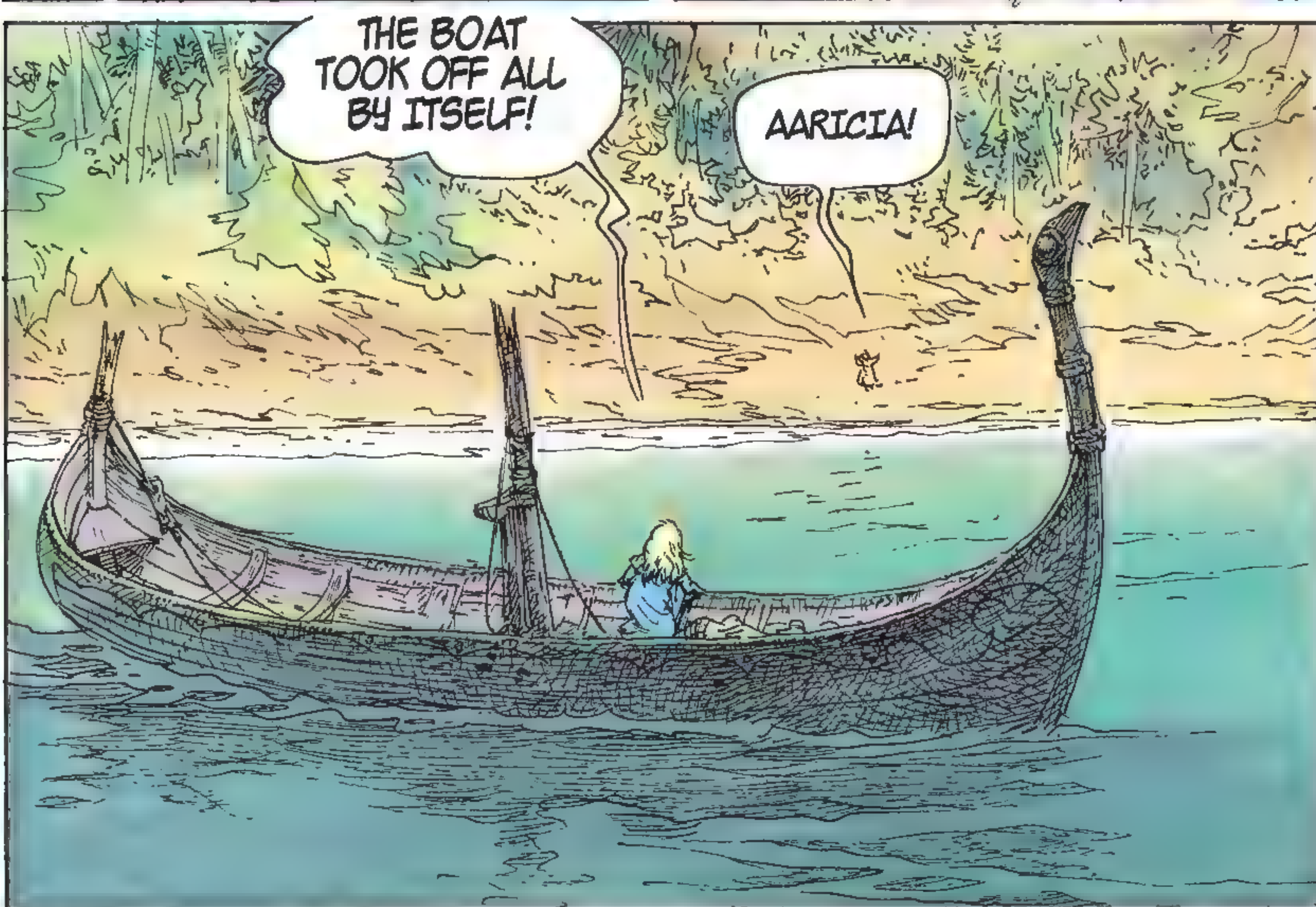
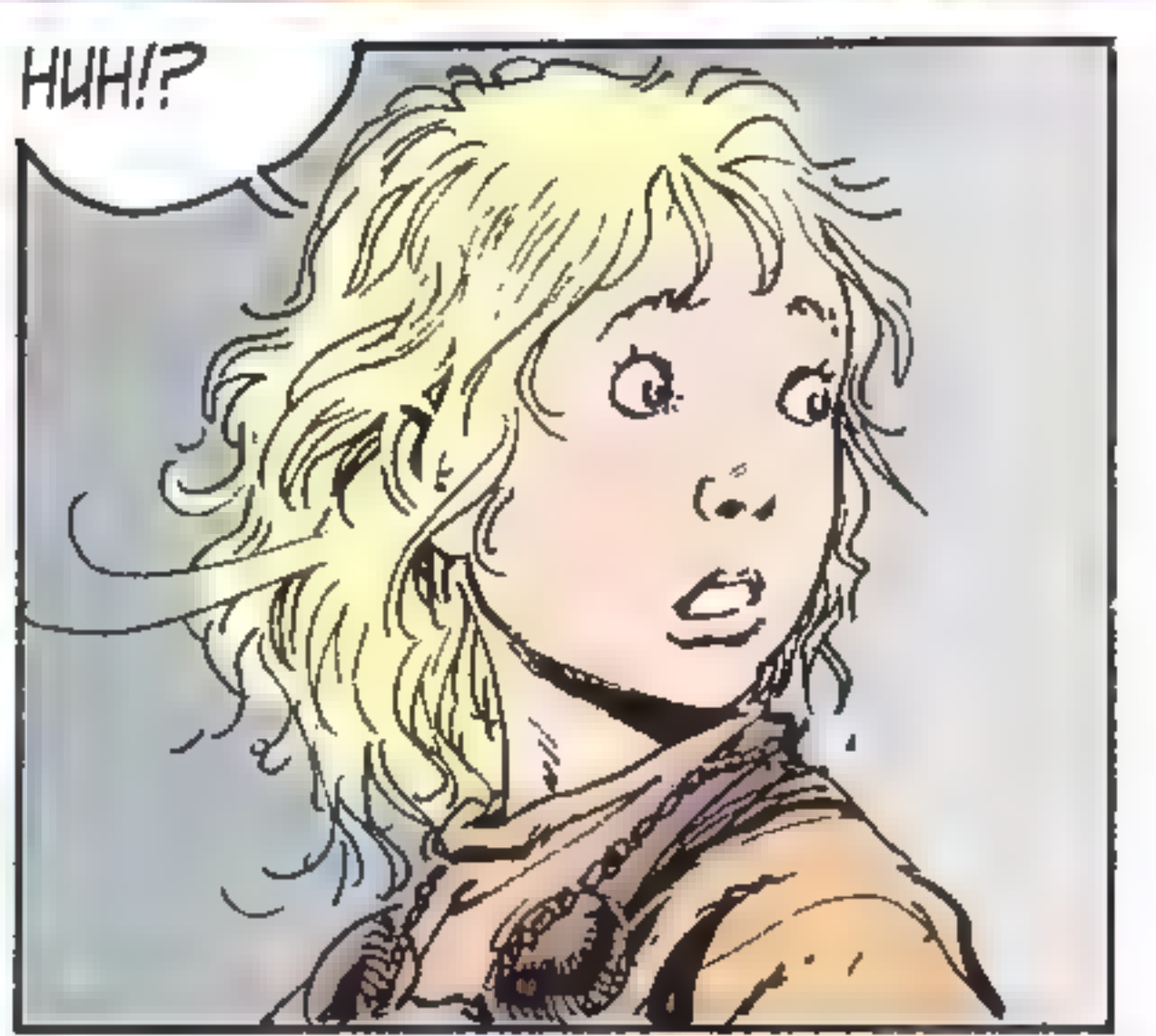
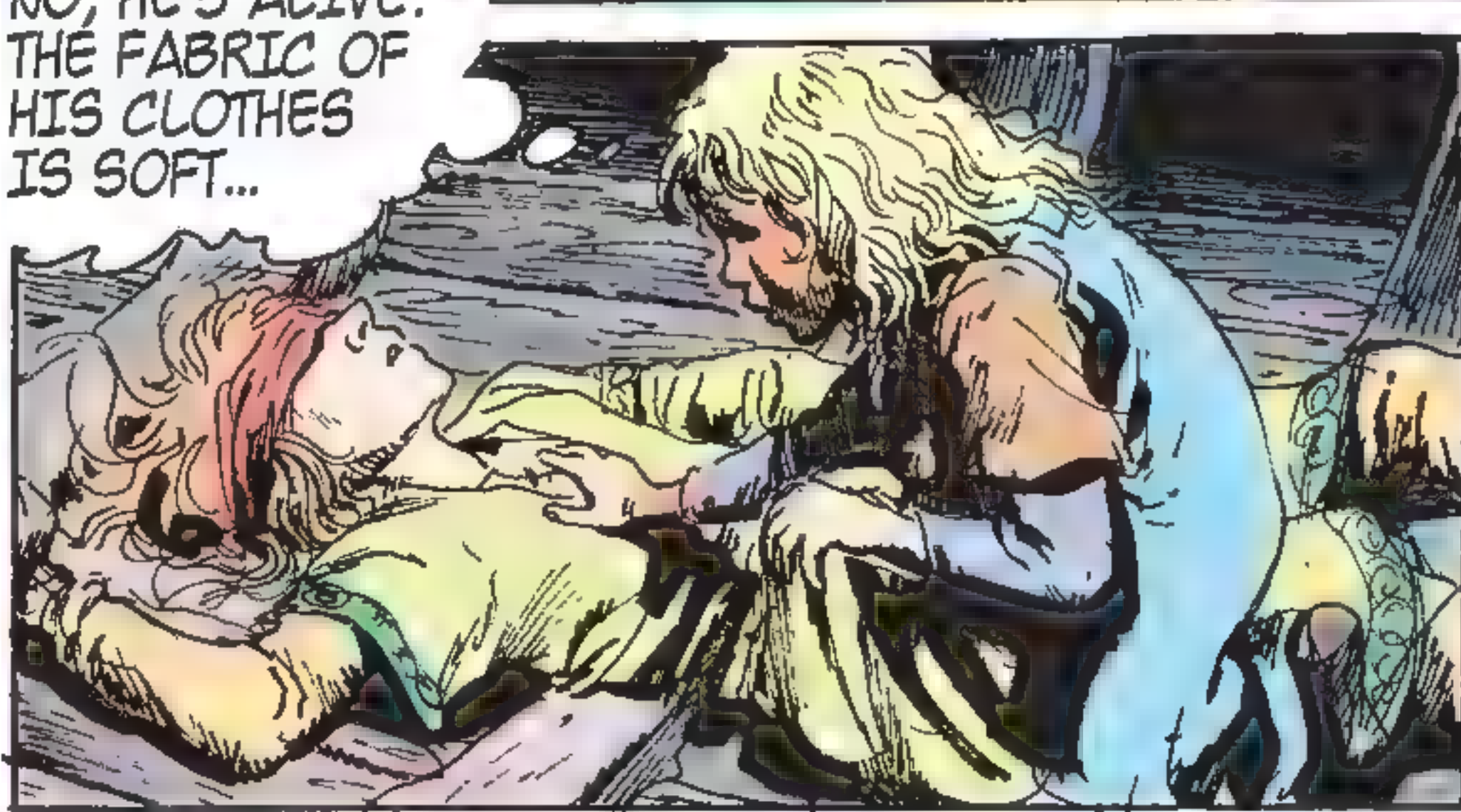
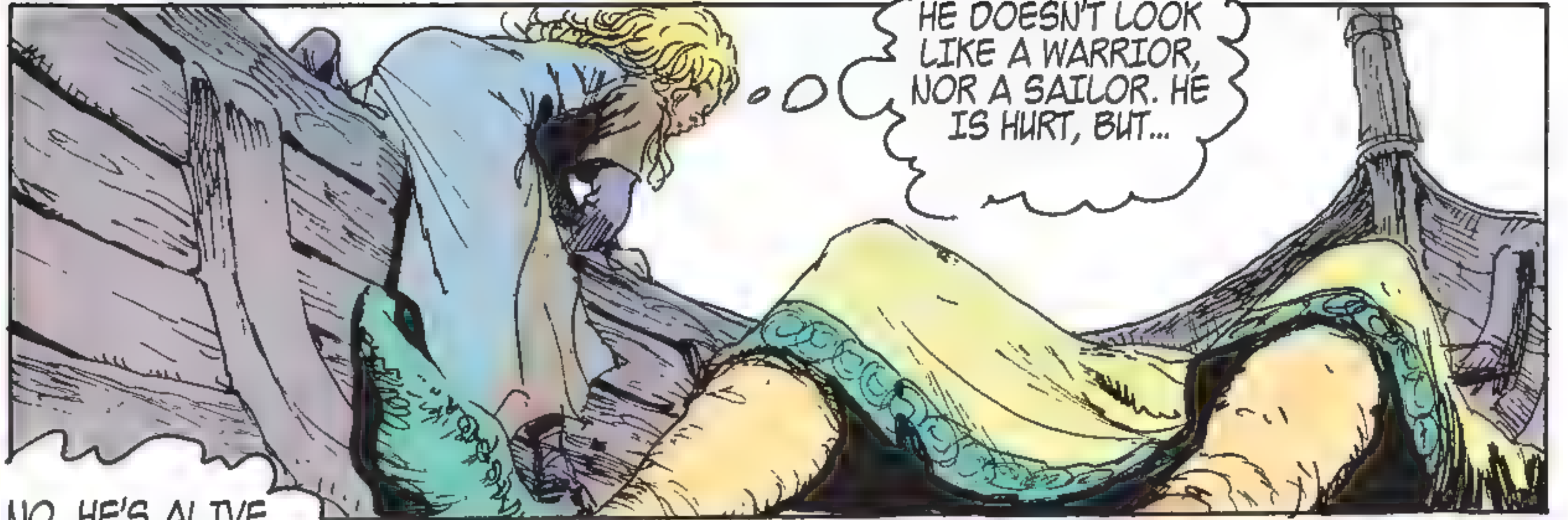
THAT'S NOT A BOAT FROM AROUND HERE.

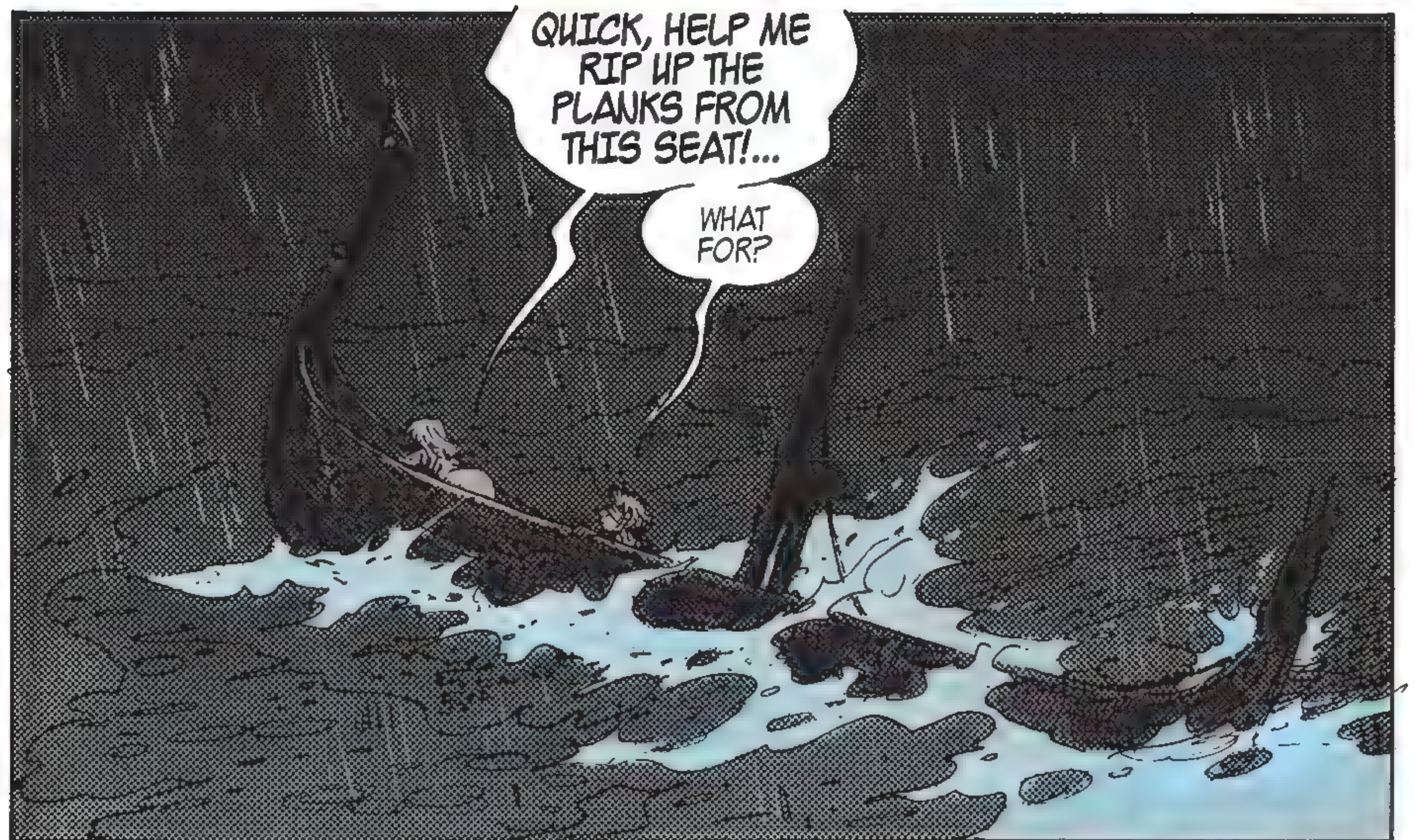
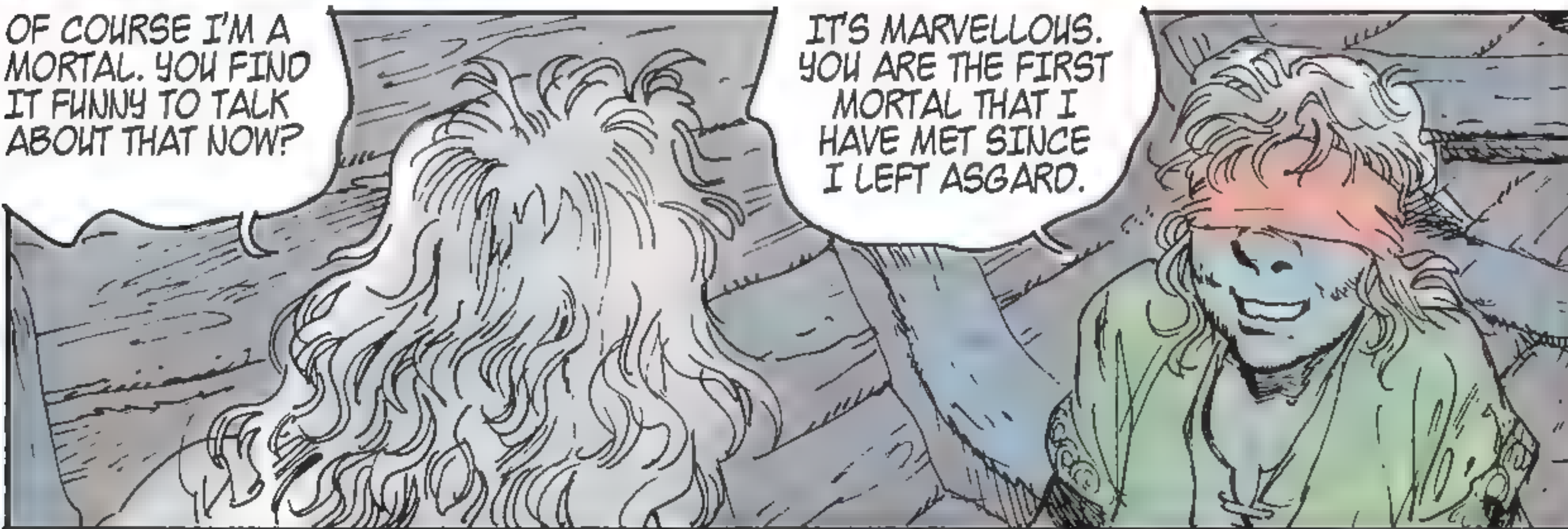
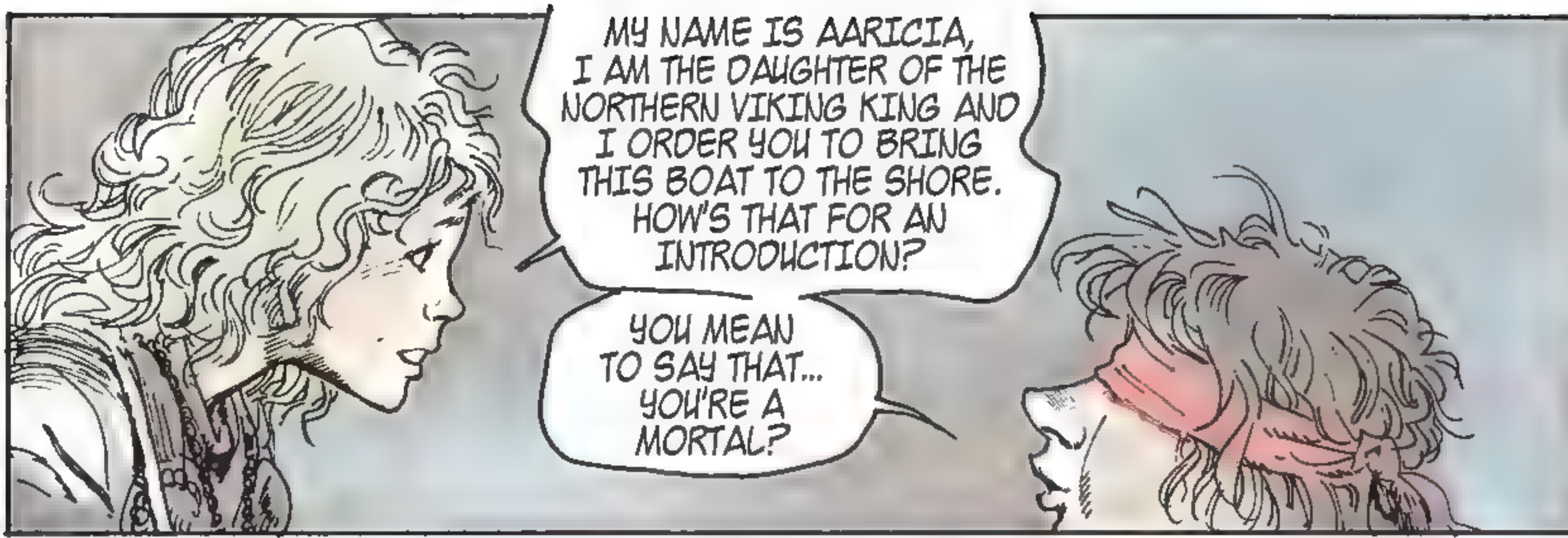
A SHIPWRECK, NO DOUBT FROM A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY. COME ON, LET'S HAVE A LOOK.

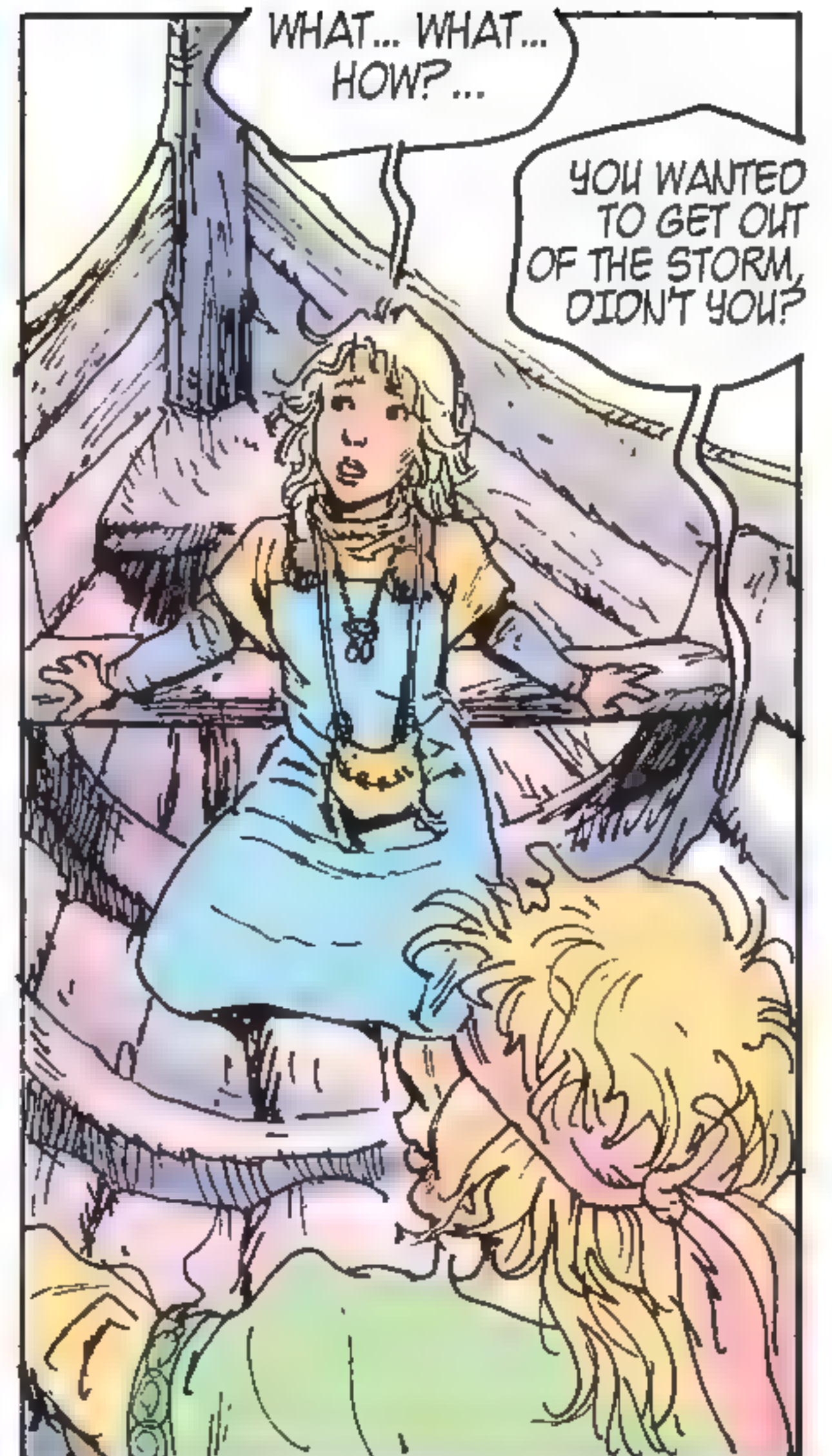
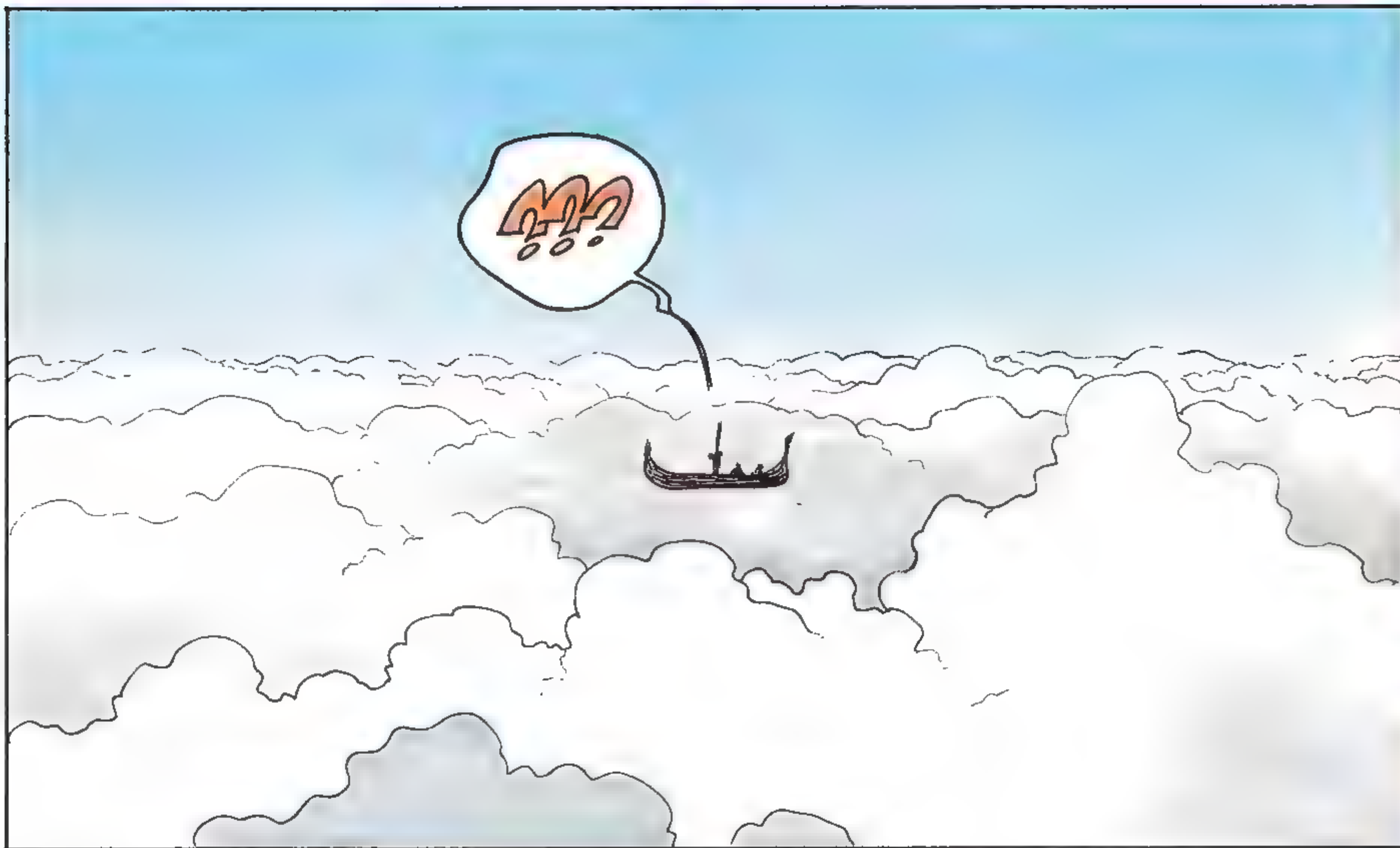
NO, AARICIA, WE SHOULD GO AND WARN THE VILLAGE.

GO ON, THEN, IF YOU WANT TO. I WANT TO GO AND SEE THIS BOAT UP CLOSE.

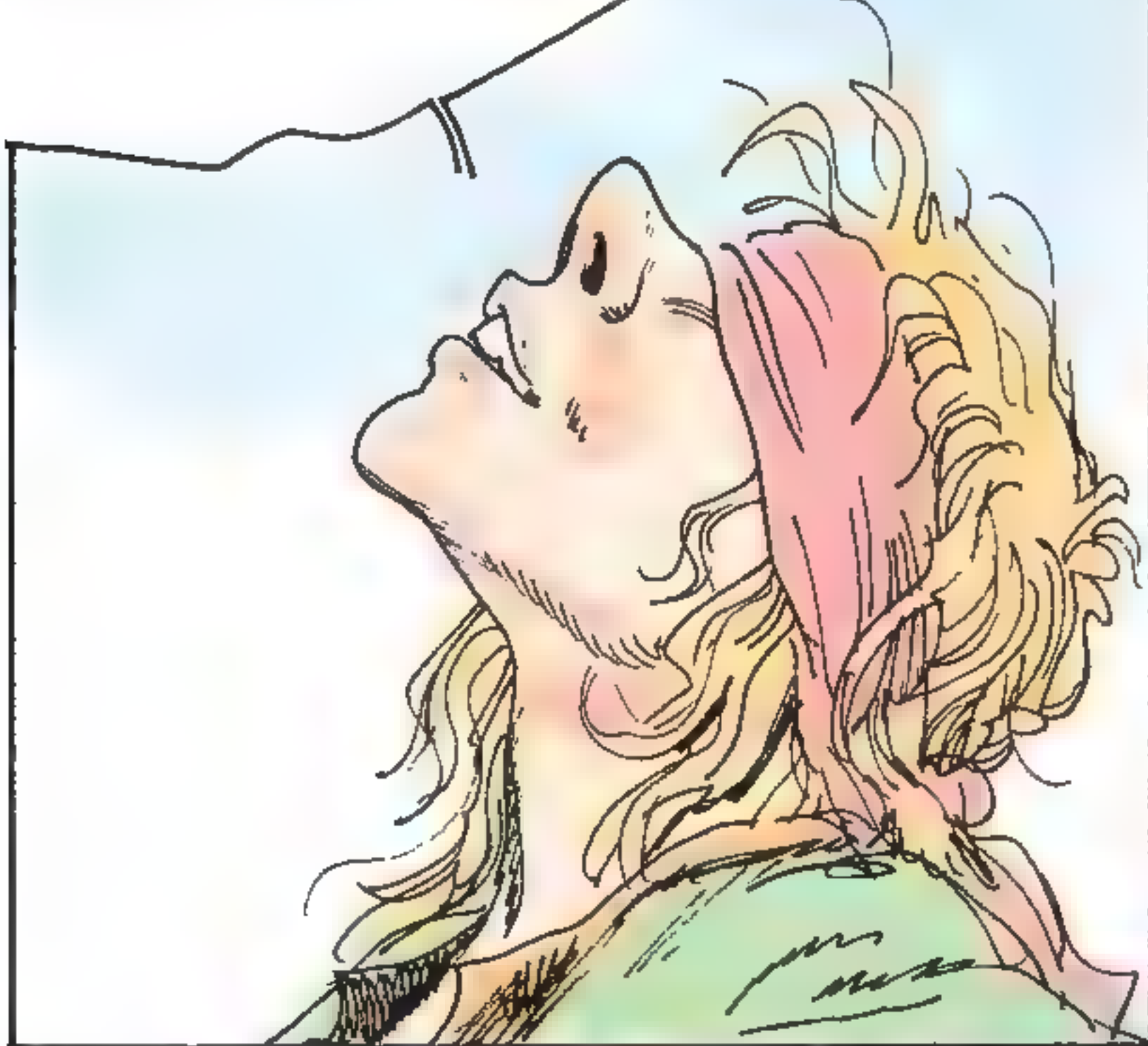








WITH THE WARMTH ON MY FACE, I FEEL THAT WE HAVE FOUND THE SUN. BUT WE CAN'T STAY UP HERE FOR TOO LONG. SEAT YOURSELF AT THE FRONT, AARICIA, AND TELL ME WHEN YOU SEE A HOLE IN THE CLOUDS.

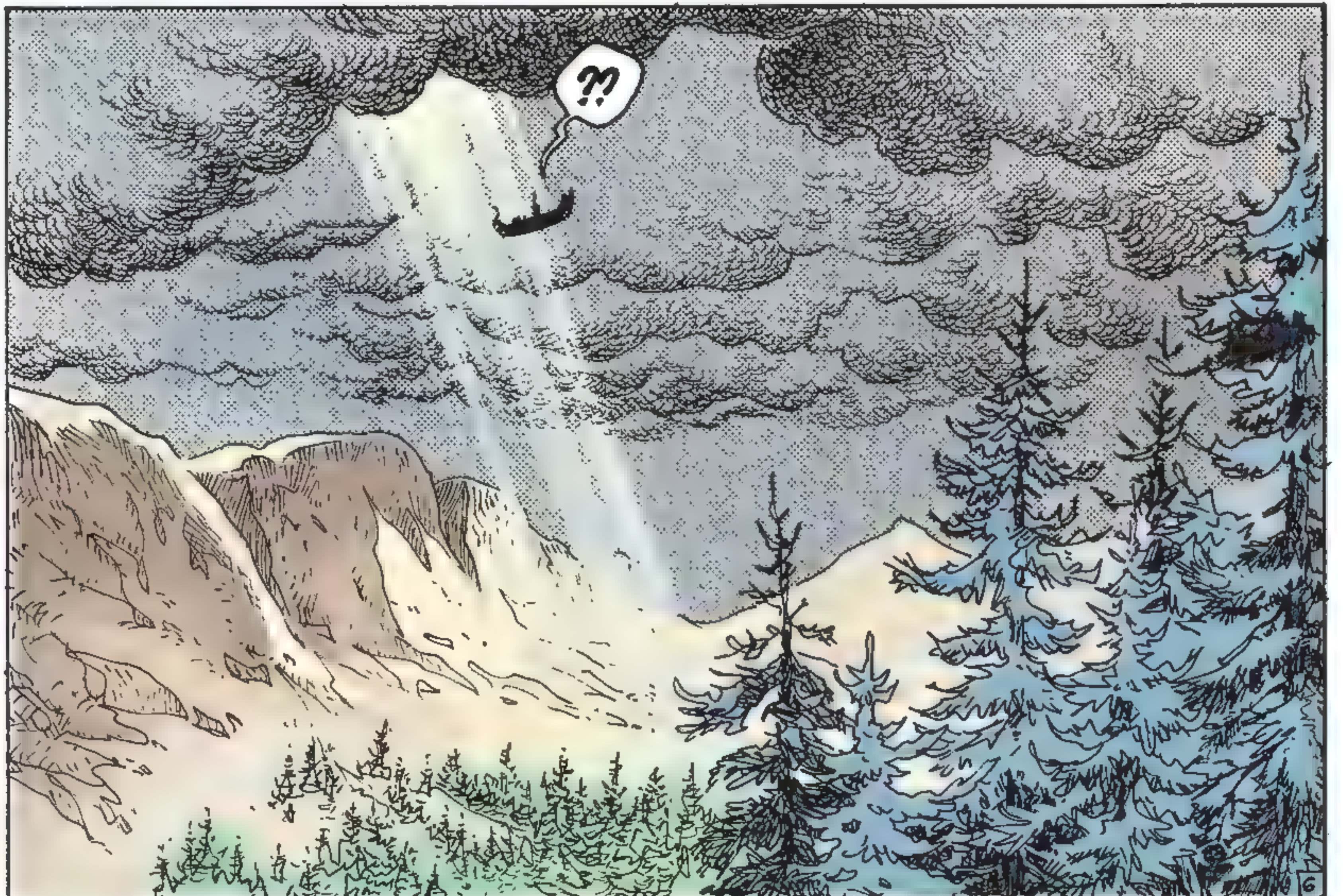
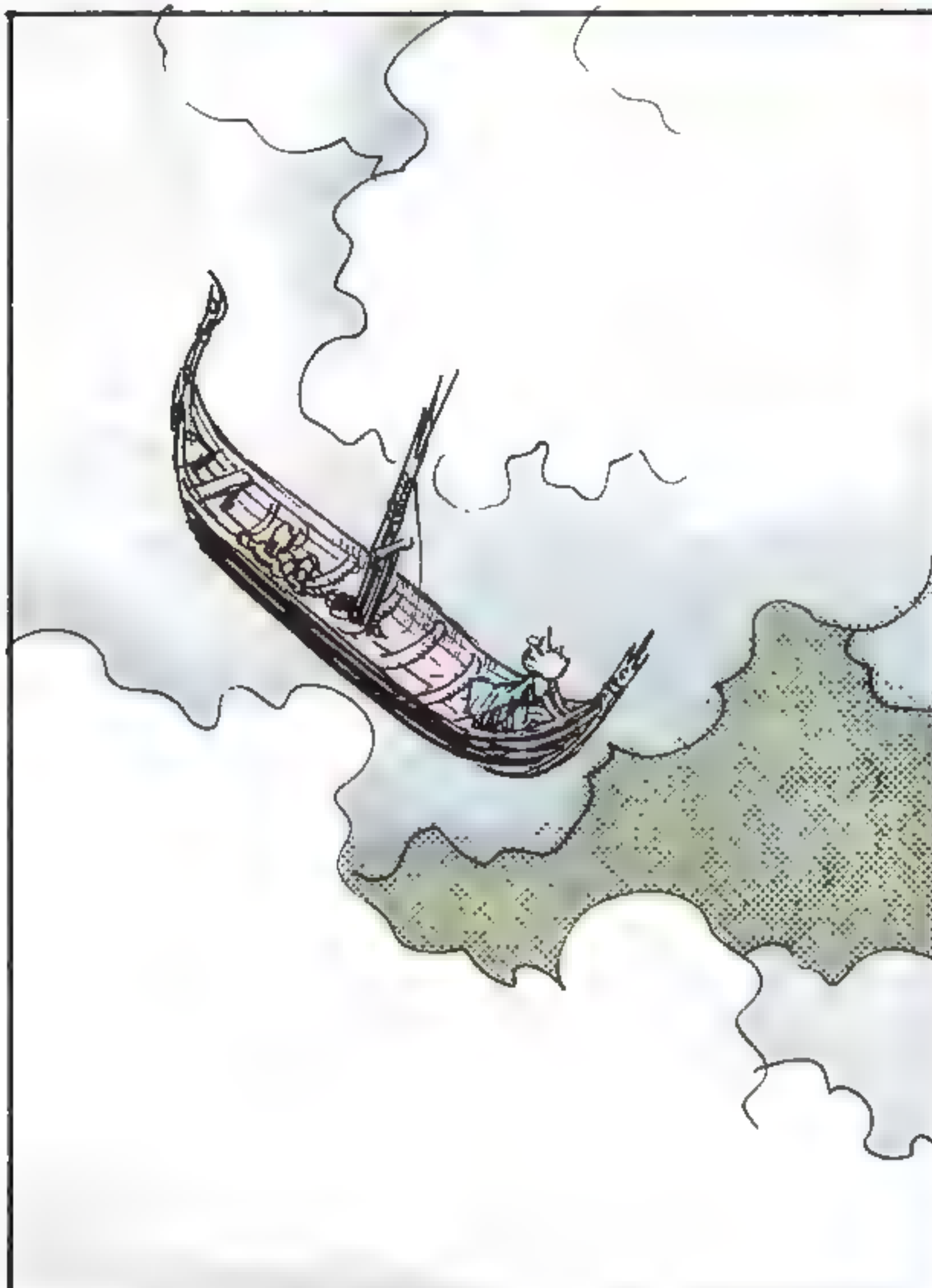
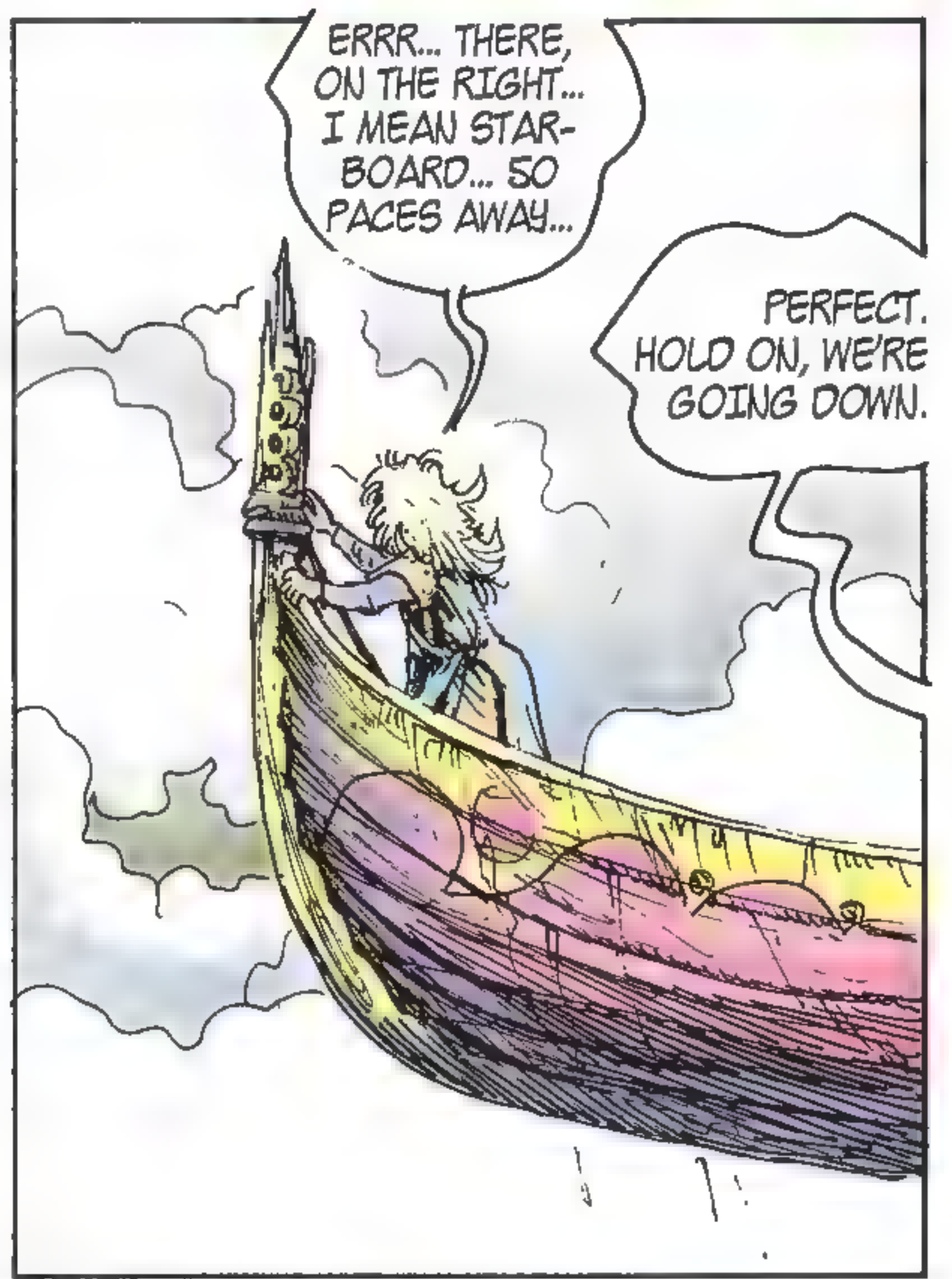


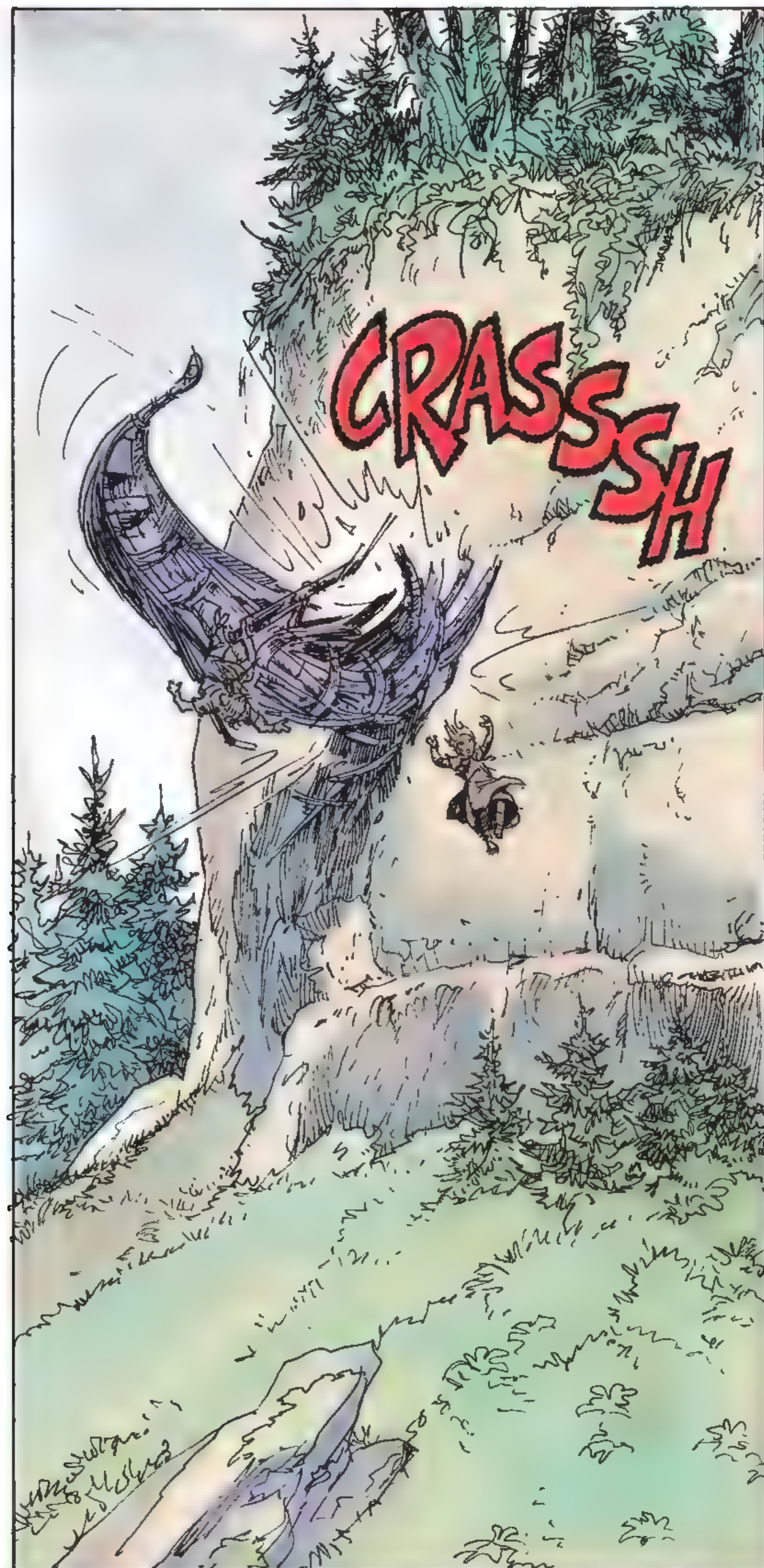
IT'S NOT HIM WHO'S MAD, IT'S ME. OR MAYBE I'M DREAMING. IT MUST BE THAT... I AM DREAMING A DREAM THAT IS STUPID, YET MARVELOUS AT THE SAME TIME...

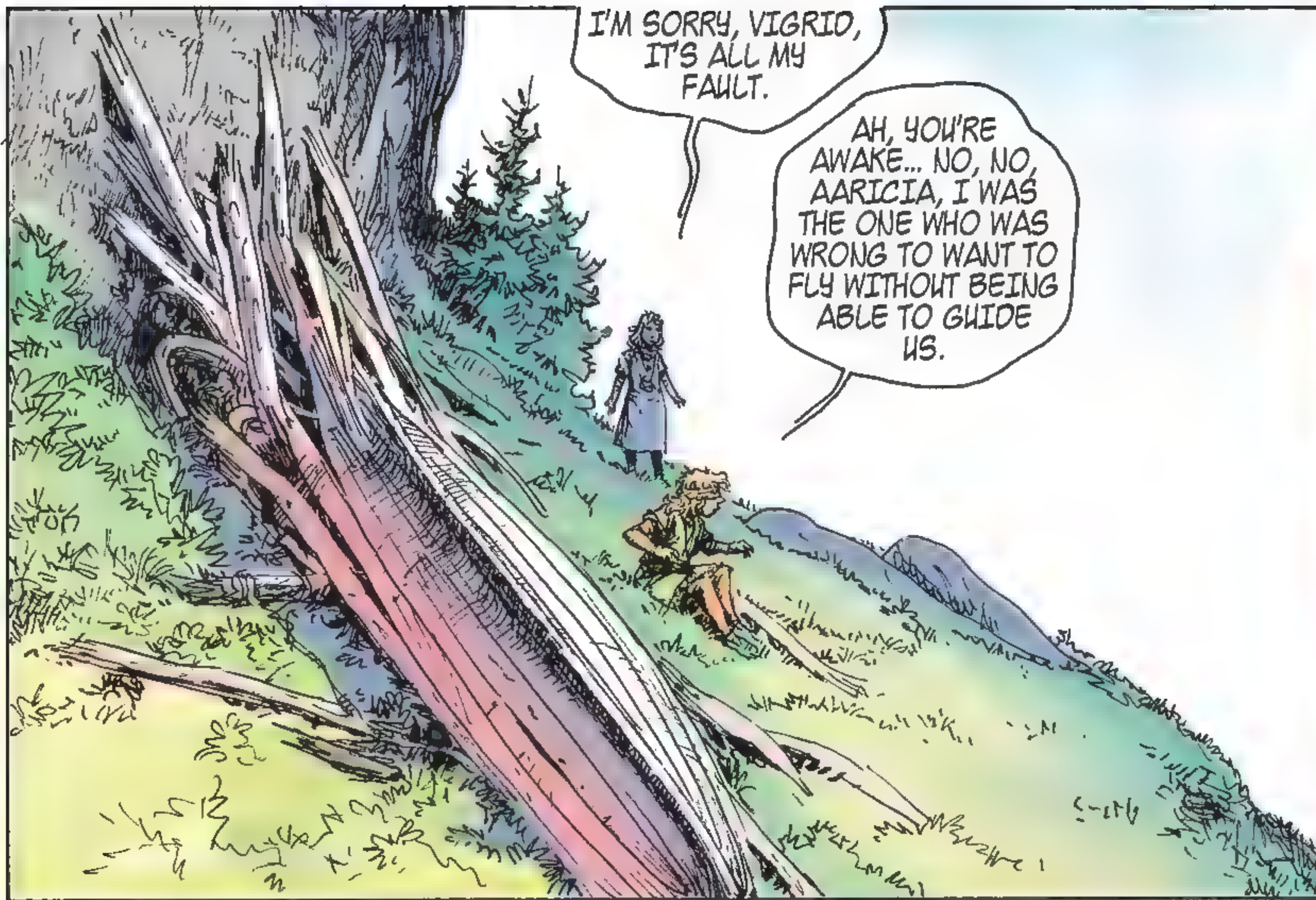


ERRR... THERE, ON THE RIGHT... I MEAN STARBOARD... 50 PAGES AWAY...

PERFECT. HOLD ON, WE'RE GOING DOWN.

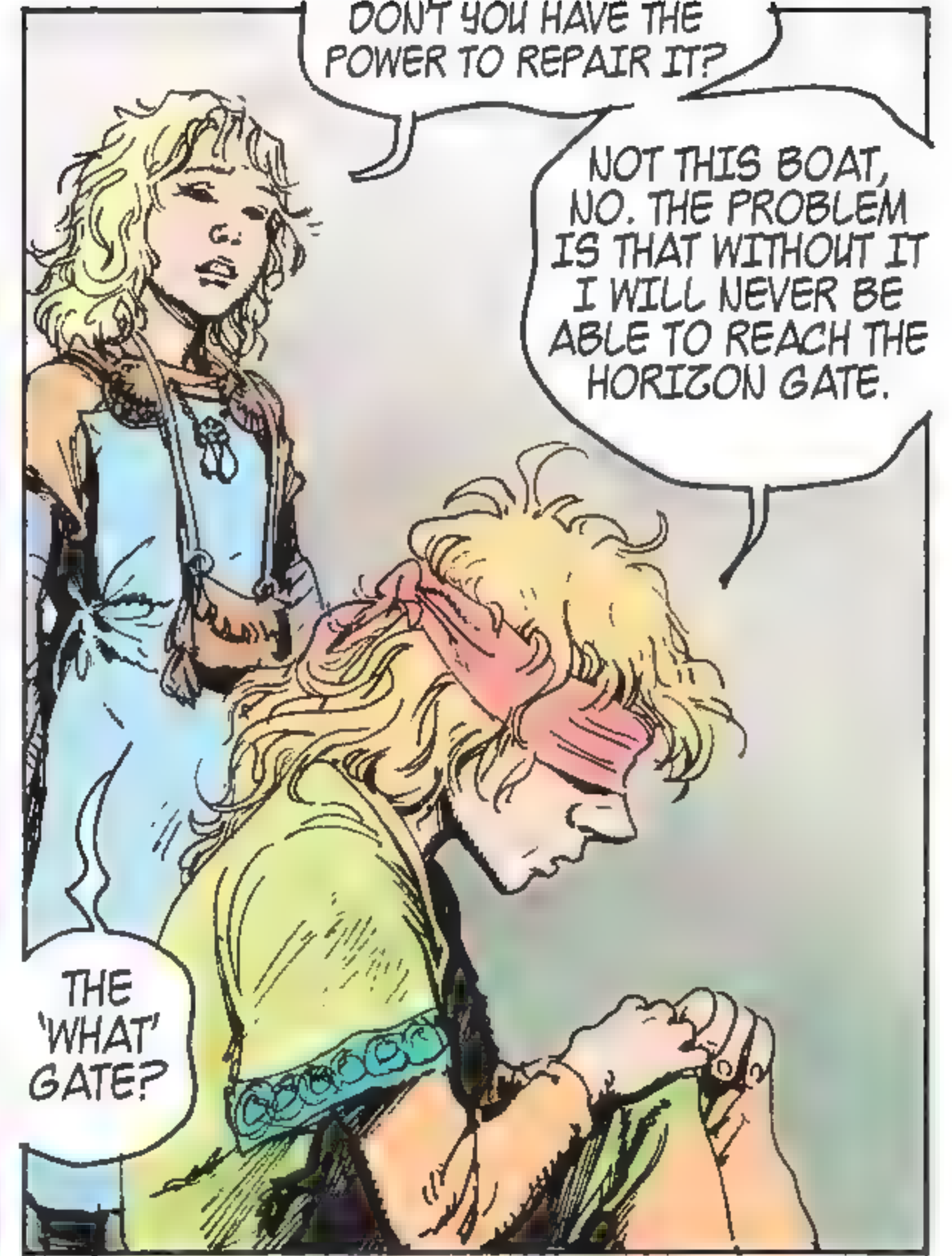






I'M SORRY, VIGRID,
IT'S ALL MY
FAULT.

AH, YOU'RE
AWAKE... NO, NO,
AARICIA, I WAS
THE ONE WHO WAS
WRONG TO WANT TO
FLY WITHOUT BEING
ABLE TO GUIDE
US.



DON'T YOU HAVE THE
POWER TO REPAIR IT?

NOT THIS BOAT,
NO. THE PROBLEM
IS THAT WITHOUT IT
I WILL NEVER BE
ABLE TO REACH THE
HORIZON GATE.

THE
'WHAT'
GATE?



HORIZON. THAT'S
WHERE YOU CAN
CROSS THE PASSAGE
BETWEEN ASGARD
AND MIDGARD, THE
SPOT WHERE THE
SEA AND SKY
BECOME ONE.

AND THERE
ISN'T ANOTHER
WAY IN?

THERE IS
BIFROST, OF
COURSE...

THE RAINBOW WHICH
MAKES A BRIDGE BET-
WEEN ODIN'S KINGDOM
AND MIDDLE EARTH.
BUT HOW COULD A
BLIND MAN, EVEN
A GOD, SEE A
RAINBOW?

HOW LONG HAS
IT BEEN SINCE...
SINCE YOU LOST
YOUR SIGHT?

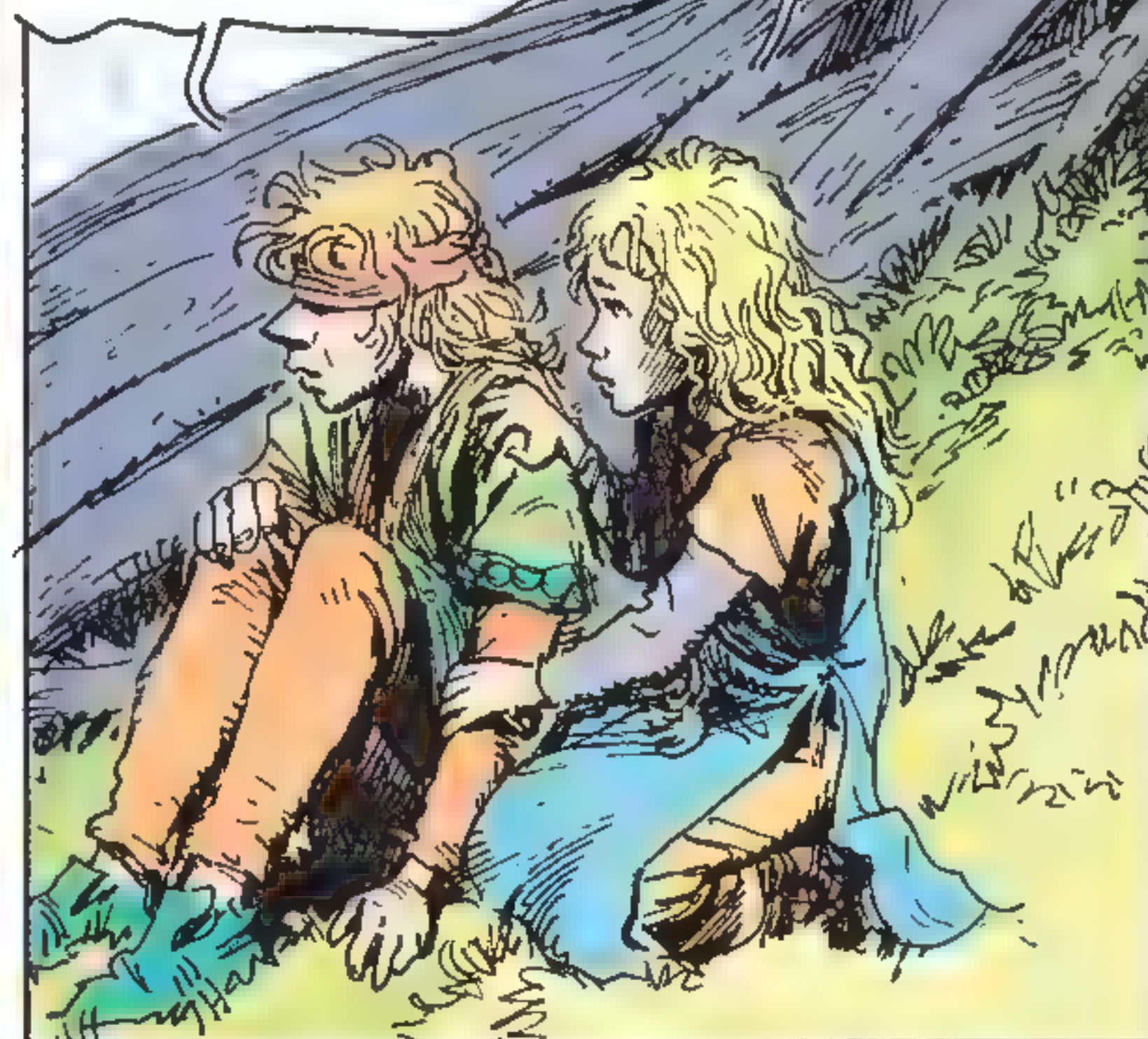
HOW LONG? THE TERM
DOESN'T MEAN MUCH
FOR US. BUT EVEN ONE
HOUR, WHEN ONE IS
INJURED, SEEMS LIKE
AN ETERNITY.

TELL ME WHAT
HAPPENED TO YOU,
VIGRID, PLEASE.

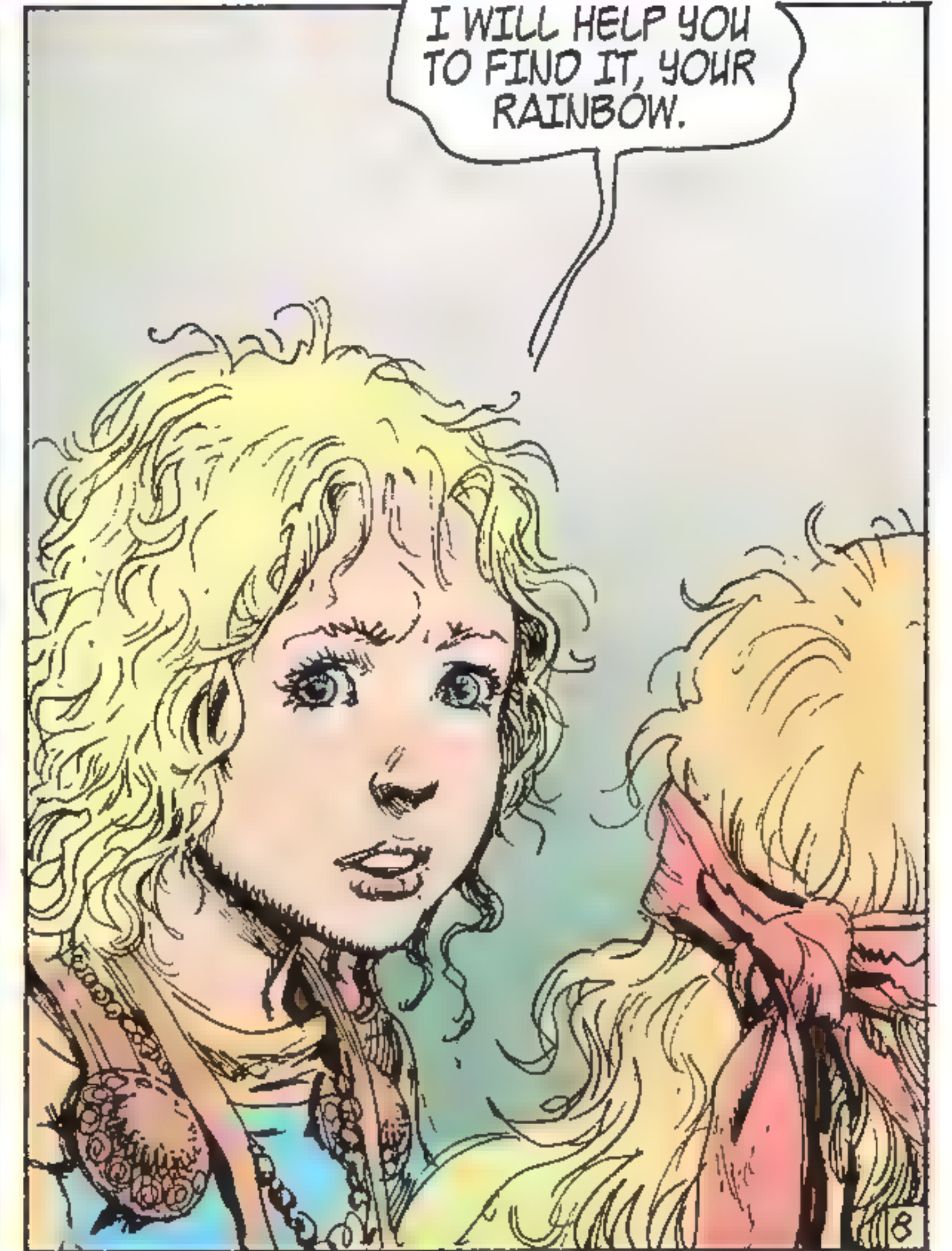


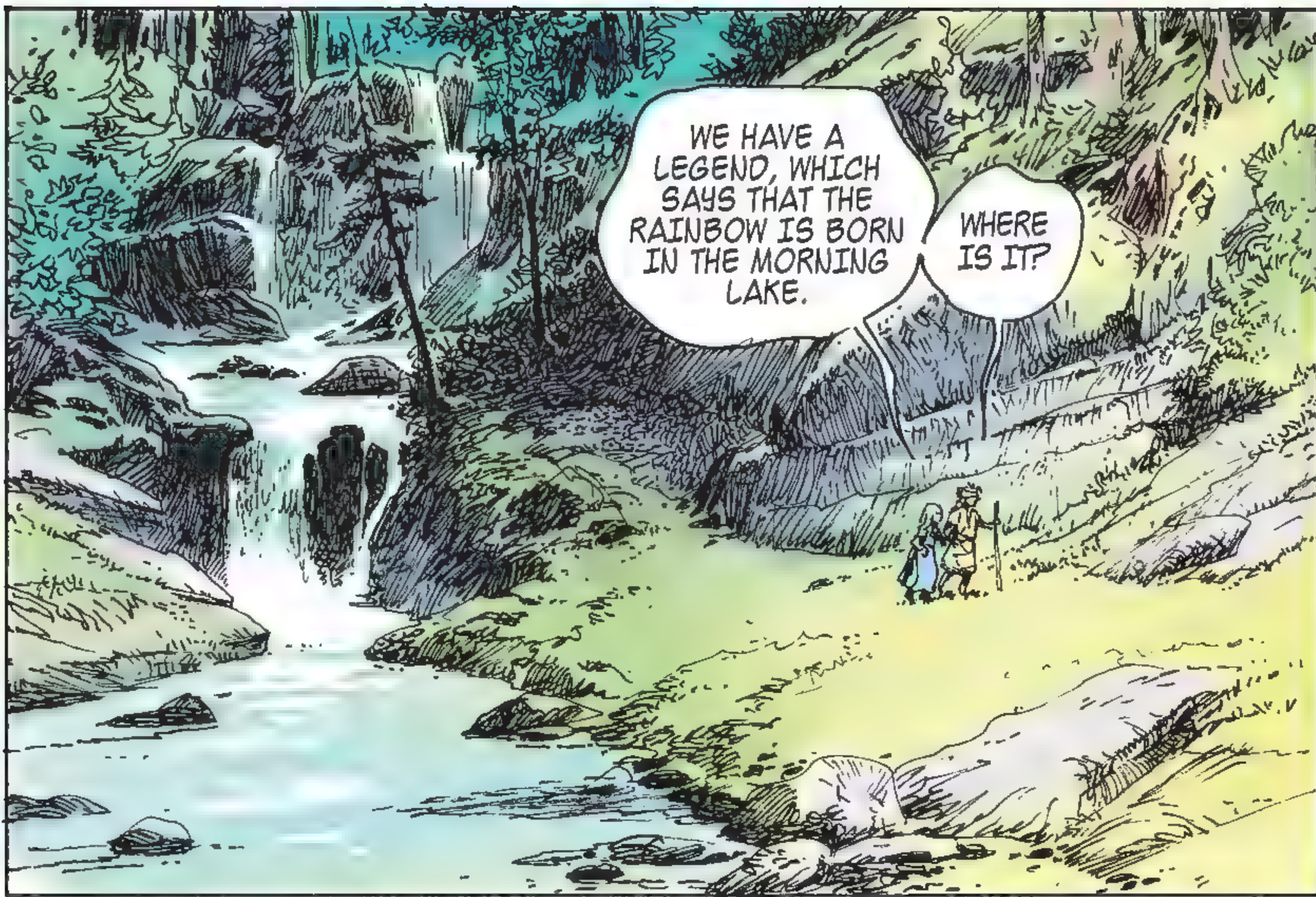
SO THAT'S EVERYTHING. I
WHO CAME TO MIDGARD TO
ACCOMPLISH GREAT WORKS,
AS YOU CAN SEE, I RATHER
FAILED. AND I CAN'T EVEN
HAVE THE CONSOLATION
OF DYING SINCE I AM
IMMORTAL. I WILL DRIFT
HERE UNTIL THE END
OF TIME.

BUT I'M
NOT
BLIND.



I WILL HELP YOU
TO FIND IT, YOUR
RAINBOW.





WE HAVE A
LEGEND, WHICH
SAYS THAT THE
RAINBOW IS BORN
IN THE MORNING
LAKE.

WHERE
IS IT?

I DON'T KNOW. SOME-
WHERE IN THE EAST,
THERE WHERE THE SUN
RISES. NOBODY HAS
EVER MANAGED TO
REACH IT, BUT IT
SEEMS THAT ON THE
EDGE OF THE LAKE
THERE IS A MOUNTAIN
IN THE SHAPE OF A
HAMMER. THE GOD
THOR'S HAMMER.

WHY DO
YOU DO THIS,
AARICIA?



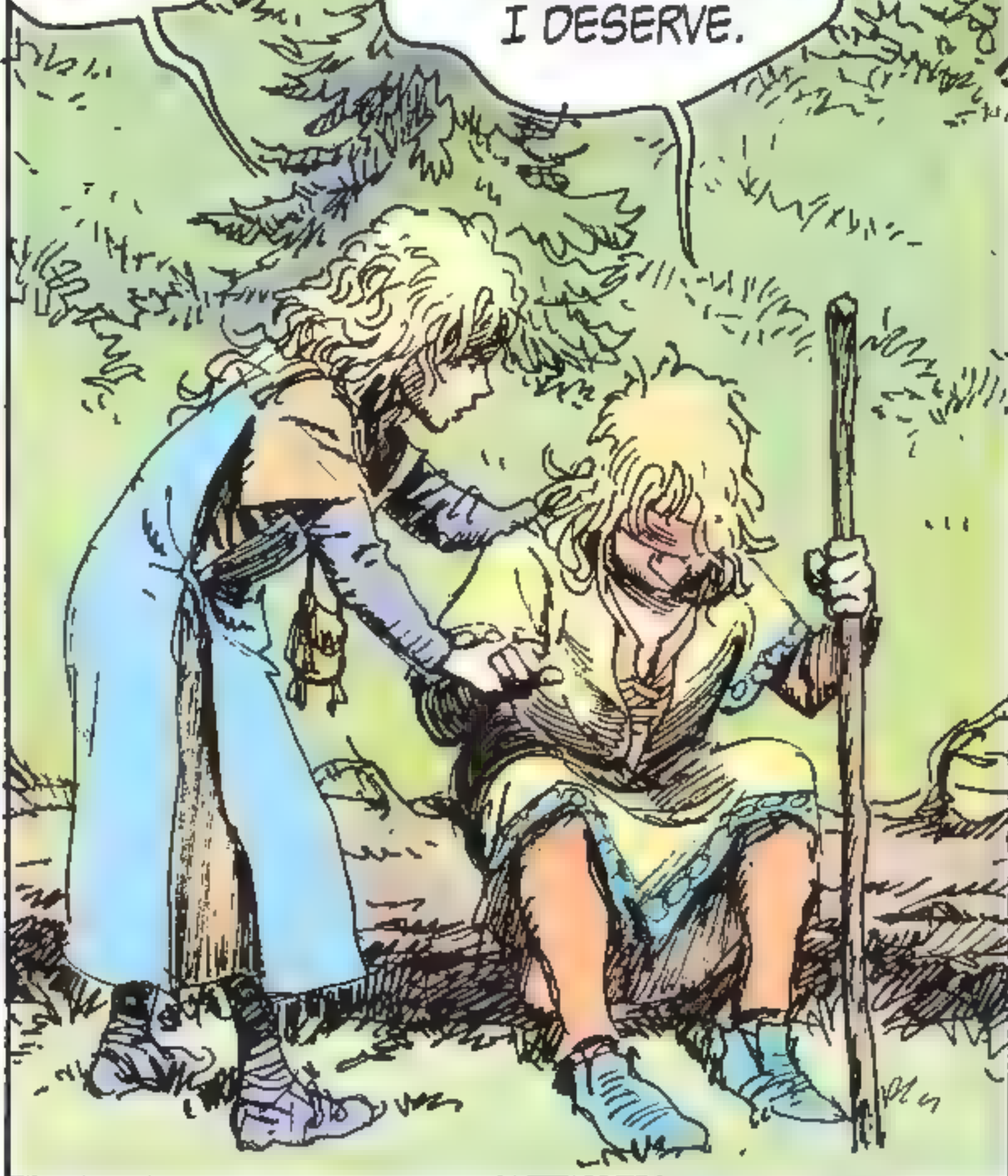
DO WHAT?
WALK WITH YOU?
SIMPLY BECAUSE
YOU NEED HELP.
WHAT'S MORE, AM I
NOT RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE LOSS OF
YOUR MAGIC
BOAT?

YOU
PITY ME,
RIGHT?

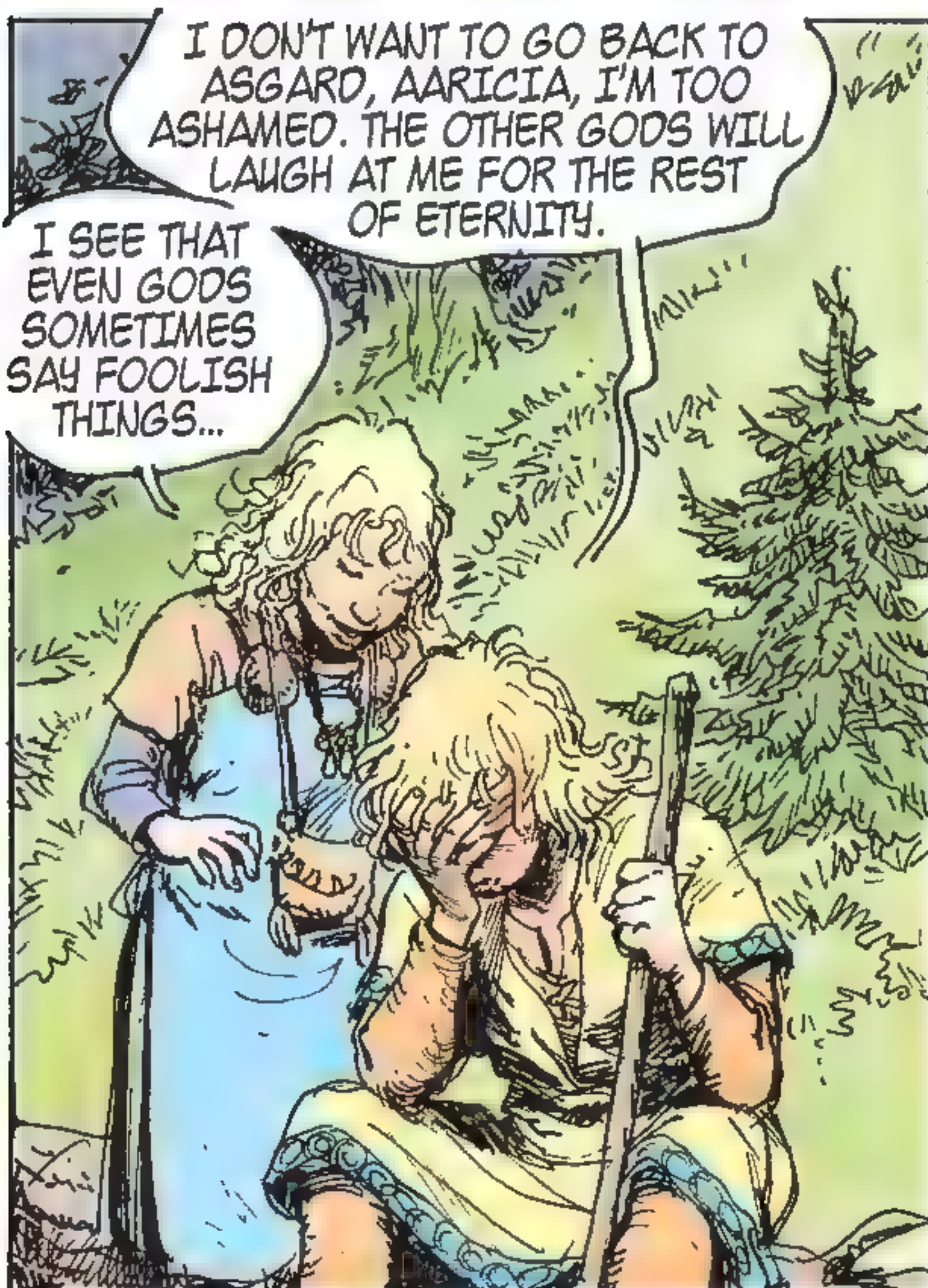


NO, NOT
AT ALL,
THAT'S NOT
RIGHT...

YES, YES, I CAN
FEEL IT, YOU PITY
ME AND YOU ARE
RIGHT, THAT'S ALL
I DESERVE.



WHEN HRUN CAPTURED ME, I WOULDN'T HAVE EVEN
BEEN ABLE TO PULL OFF ONE OF HIS NAILS. THAT
CURSED GIANT WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER TO HAVE
KEPT ME PRISONER IN THE ICE. THE FEATS OF GOD
VIGRID, WHAT A JOKE! THE VALIANT GOD VIGRID
MOPES AROUND ON MIDGARD LIKE A CRIPPLE,
AND A MORTAL HAS TO COME SAVE HIM.



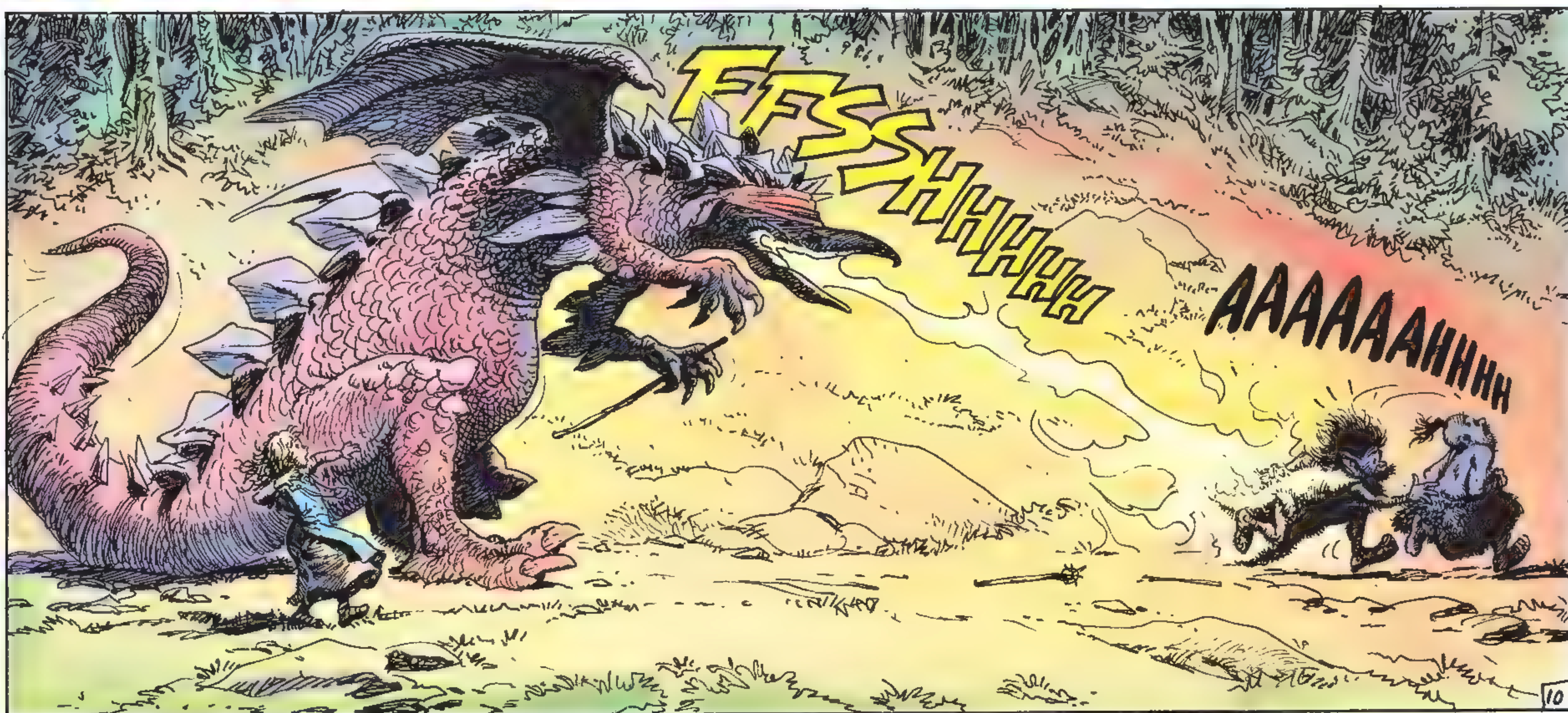
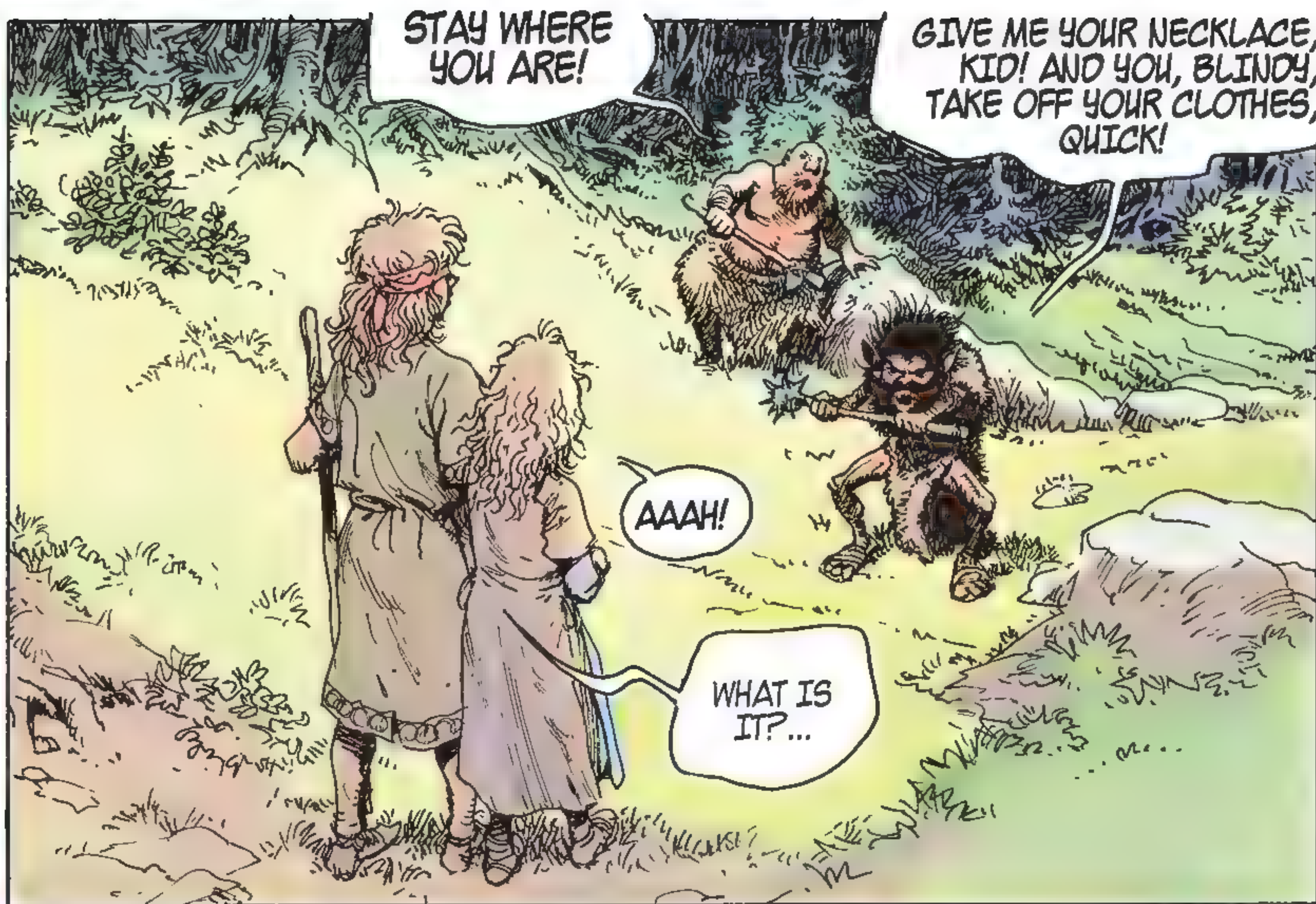
I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO
ASGARD, AARICIA, I'M TOO
ASHAMED. THE OTHER GODS WILL
LAUGH AT ME FOR THE REST
OF ETERNITY.

I SEE THAT
EVEN GODS
SOMETIMES
SAY FOOLISH
THINGS...

YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO
ASGARD, VIGRID. THERE YOU
WILL ASK THE GREAT GOD-
DESS FRIGG OR ANOTHER
GOD TO GIVE YOU BACK YOUR
SIGHT. THEN YOU CAN COME
BACK TO ACCOMPLISH
YOUR FEATS.

YOU...
YOU THINK
SO?





NOT THE BEST BANDITS
IN MIDGARD. THEY'RE
ALREADY OUT OF
EARSHOT.



H... HOW DID
YOU DO THAT?
I'VE NEVER BEEN
SO AFRAID IN
ALL MY LIFE.

OH, THAT'S A
CLASSIC TRICK.
ALL THE GODS KNOW
THAT ONE. BUT IT ONLY
WORKS ON MORTALS, OF
COURSE. WERE THERE
MANY OF THEM?



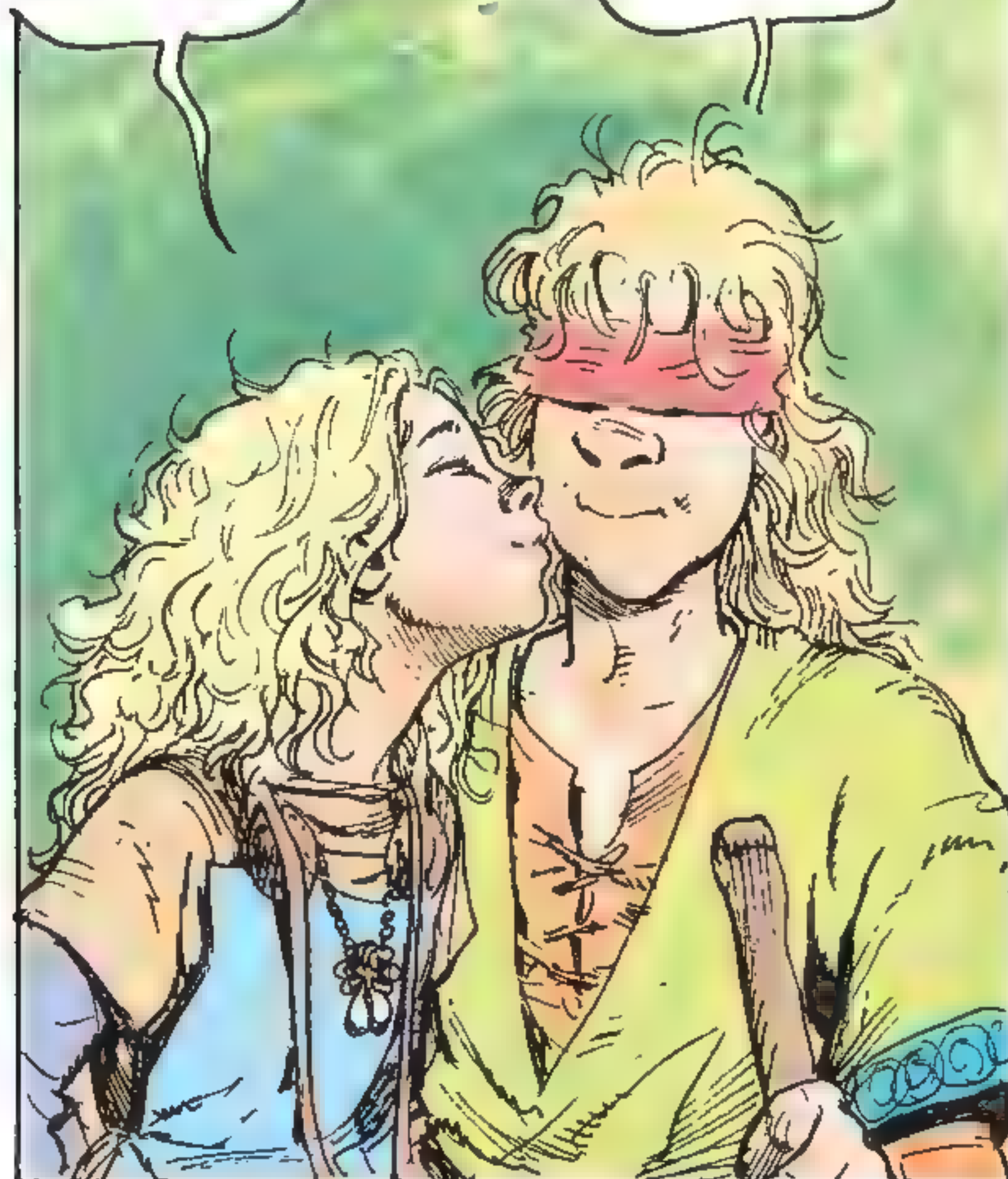
WHO? OH, THE
BANDITS... AT LEAST
A DOZEN AND THEY
WERE BIG LIKE TREES...
WITH ENORMOUS SHARP
KNIVES AND POISONED
AXES...

REALLY?



YOU'RE GREAT,
VIGRID. YOU HAVE
ACCOMPLISHED A
GREAT FEAT.

YOU THINK?
I DIDN'T
DO MUCH...



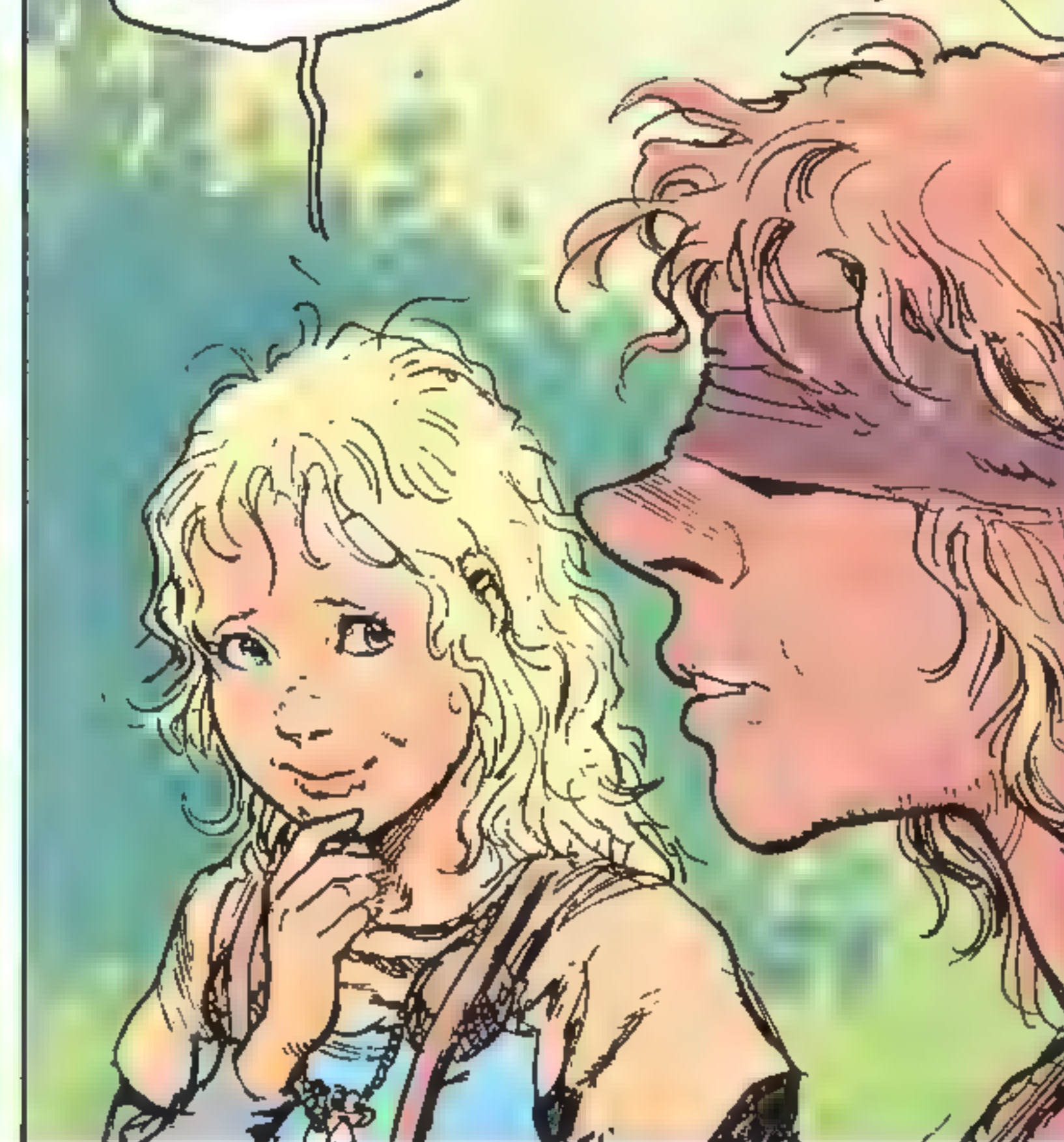
TO SAVE A PRINCESS BY
MAKING TWELVE TERRIBLE
GIANTS RUN AWAY, THAT'S
NOT A FEAT, EHP TELL ME,
CAN YOU TRANSFORM INTO
ANY ANIMAL?

OF COURSE,
IT'S EASY.
WHY?



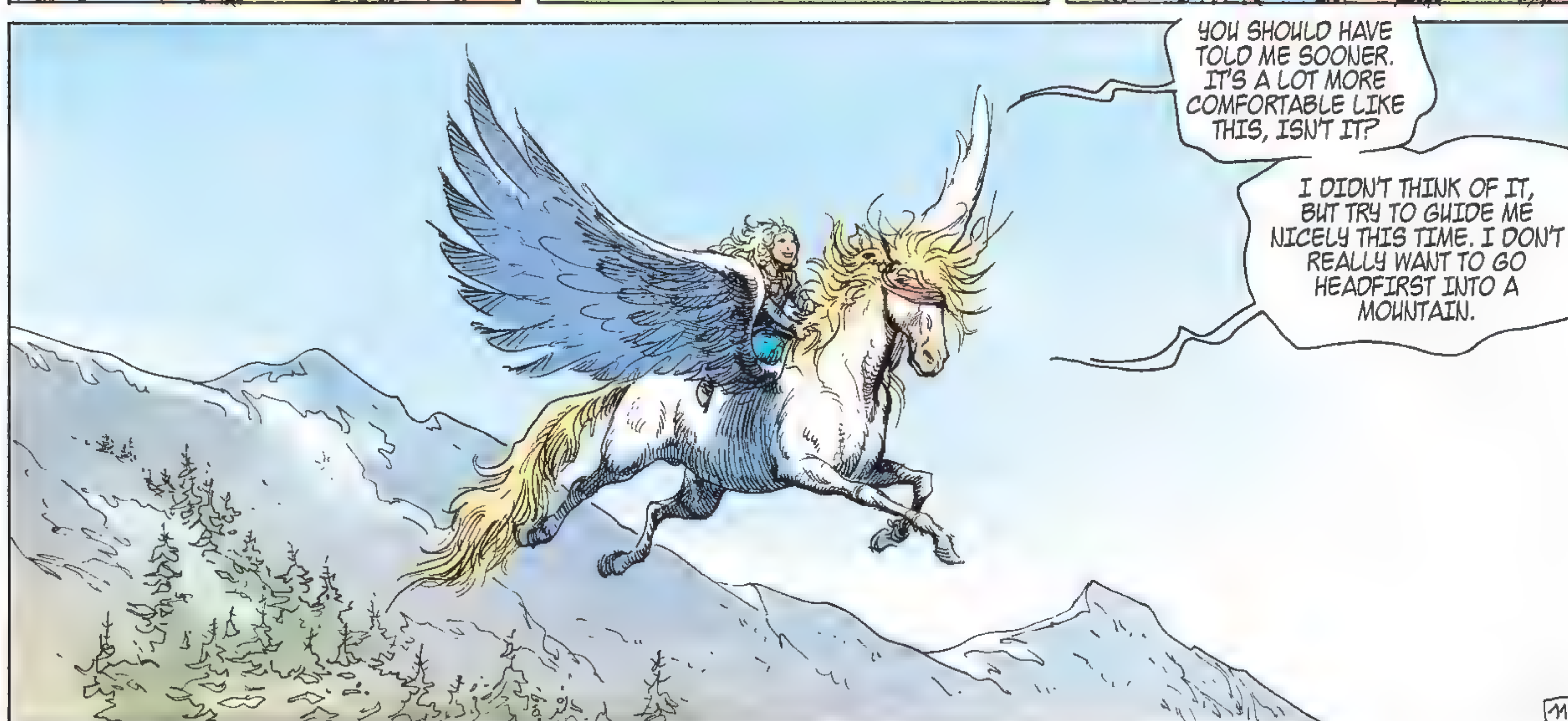
WHAT EXACTLY
DO YOU MEAN BY
IMAGINARY?

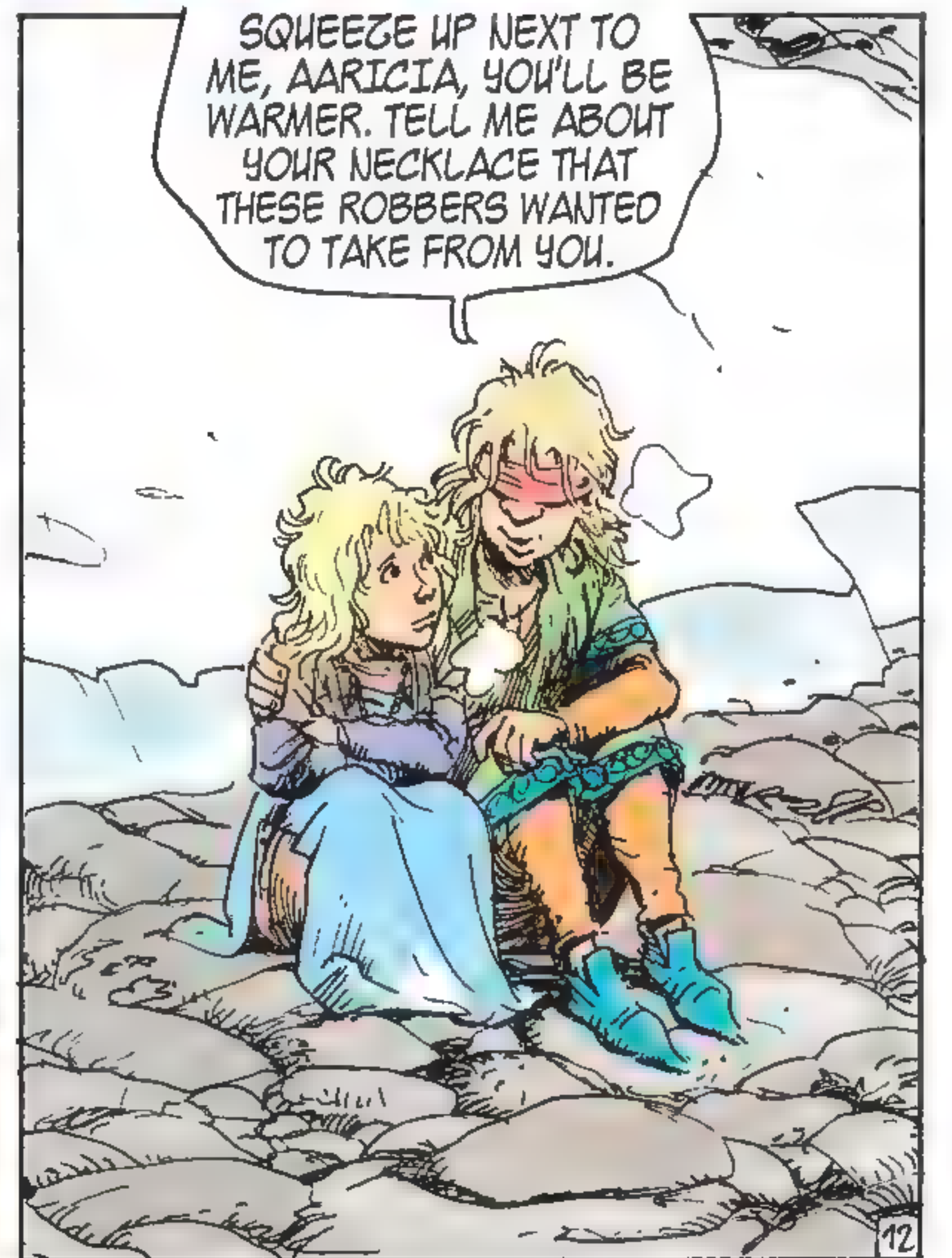
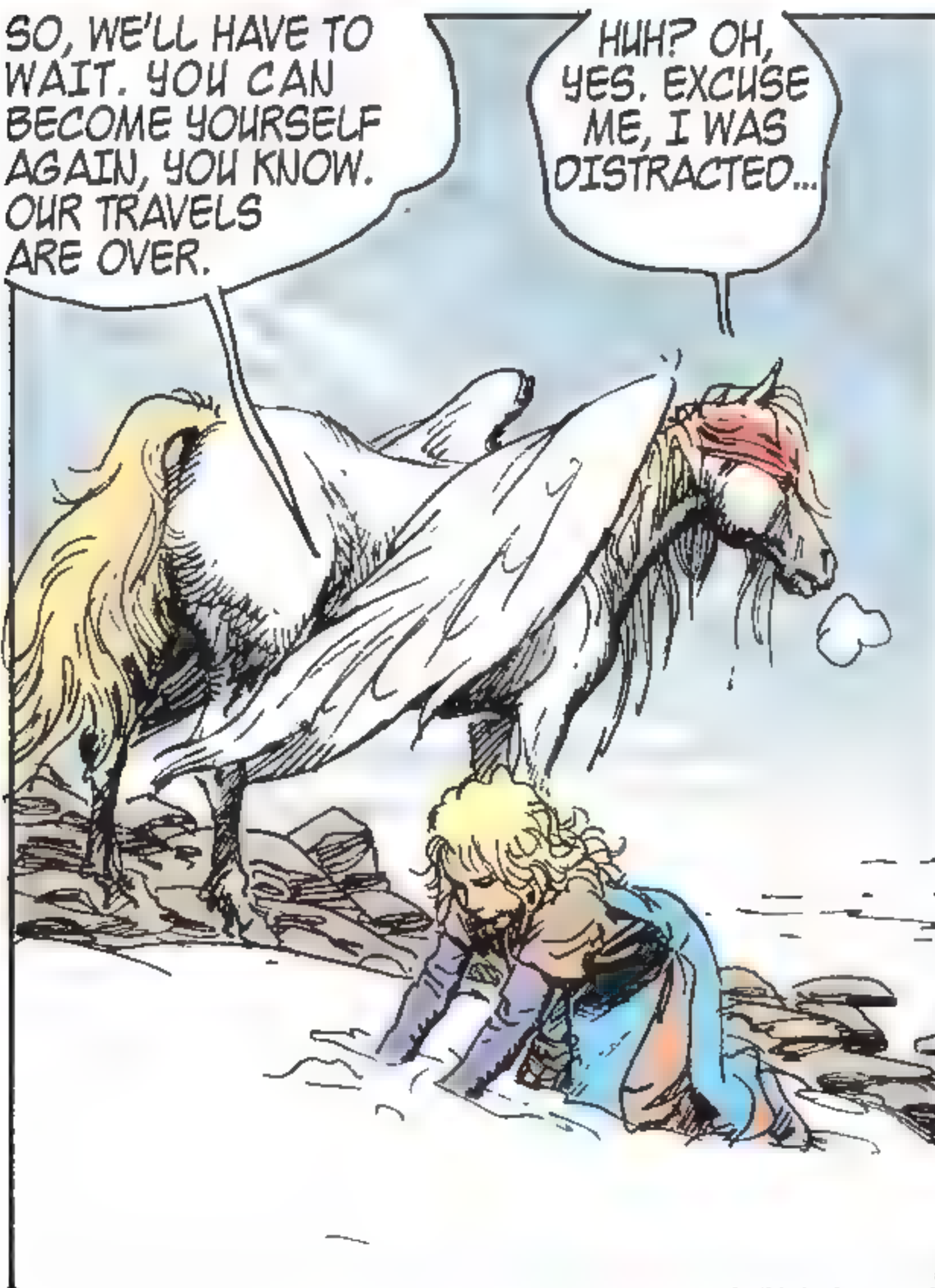
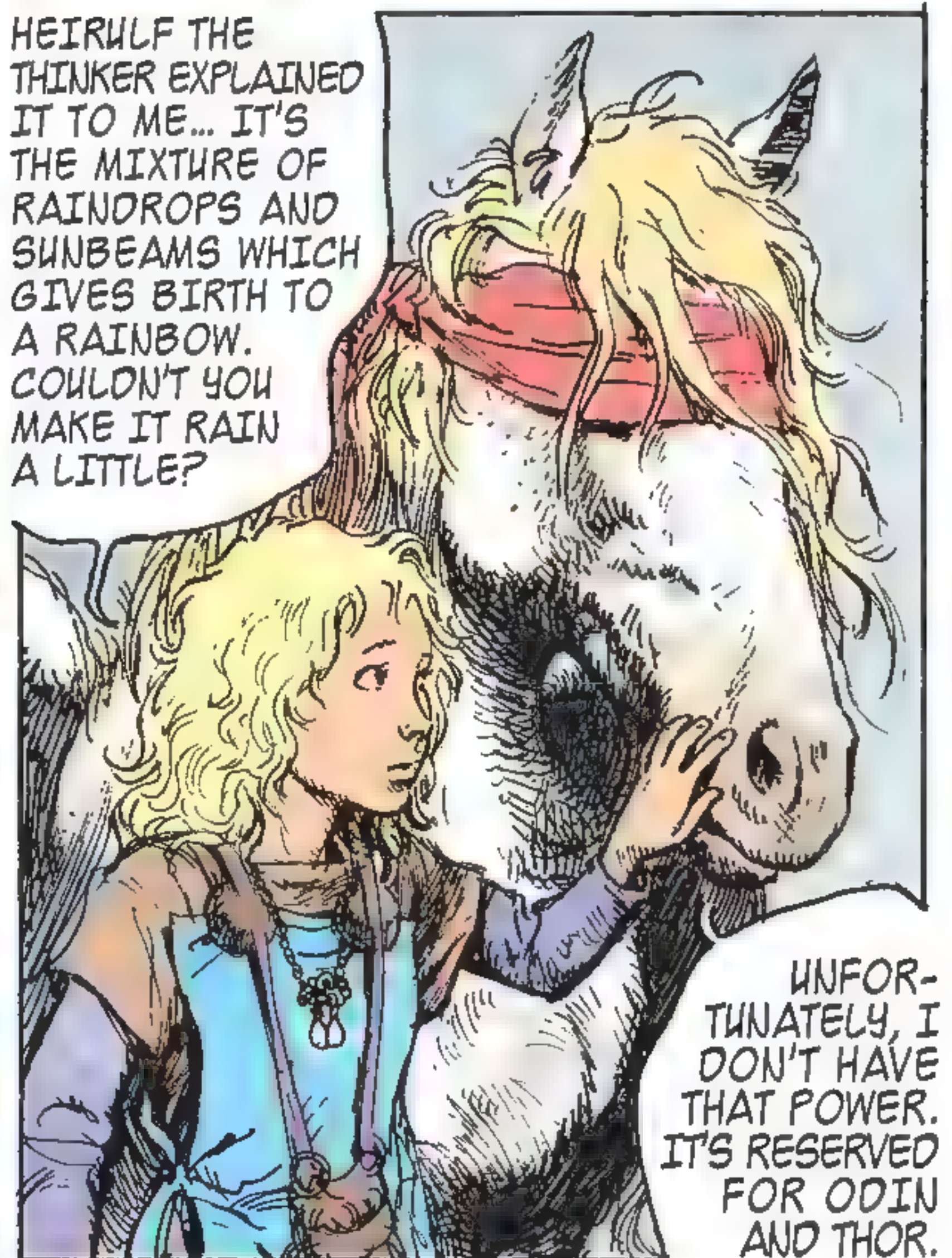
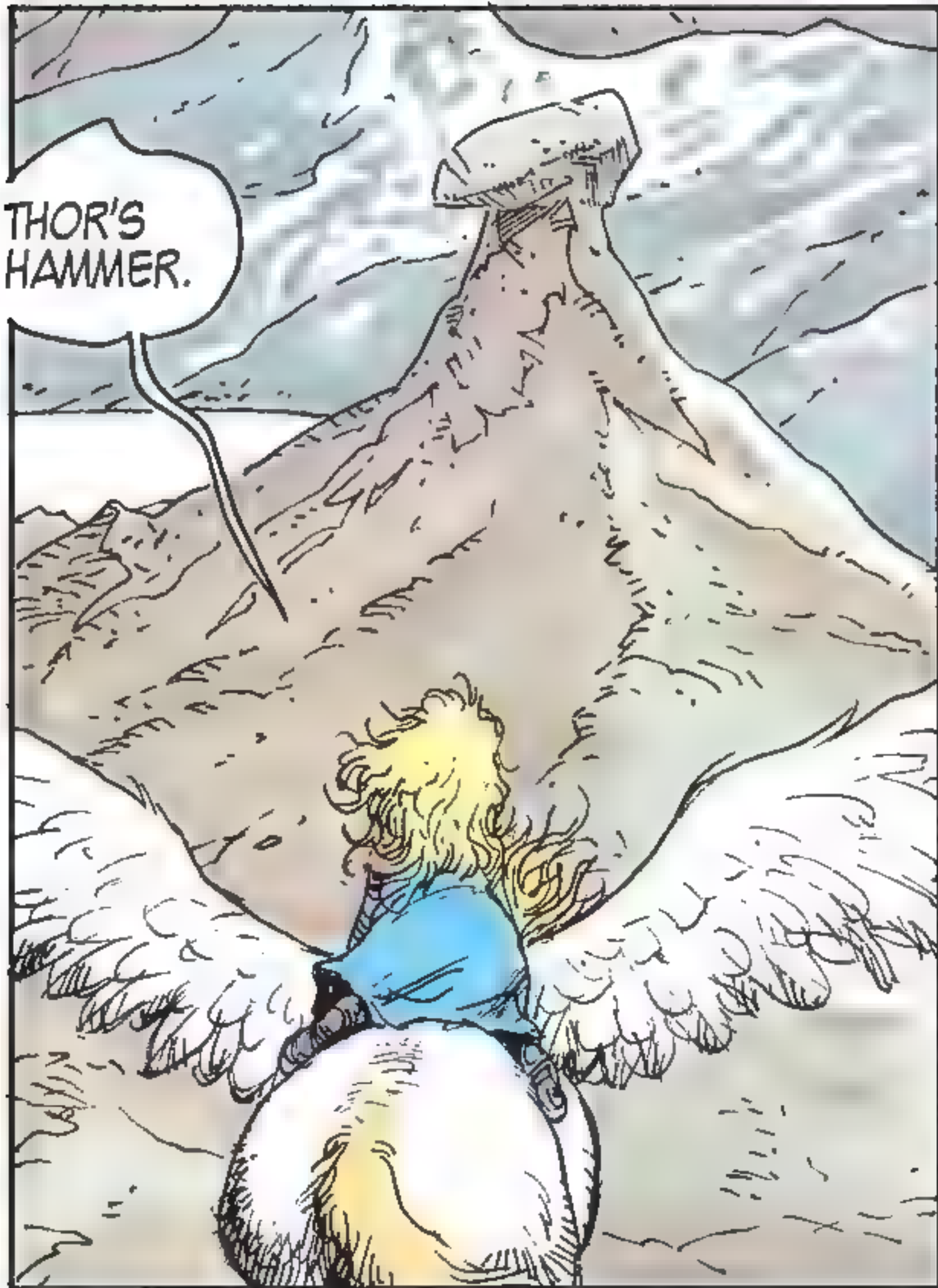
EVEN
AN IMAGINARY
ANIMAL?



YOU SHOULD HAVE
TOLD ME SOONER.
IT'S A LOT MORE
COMFORTABLE LIKE
THIS, ISN'T IT?

I DIDN'T THINK OF IT,
BUT TRY TO GUIDE ME
NICELY THIS TIME. I DON'T
REALLY WANT TO GO
HEADFIRST INTO A
MOUNTAIN.



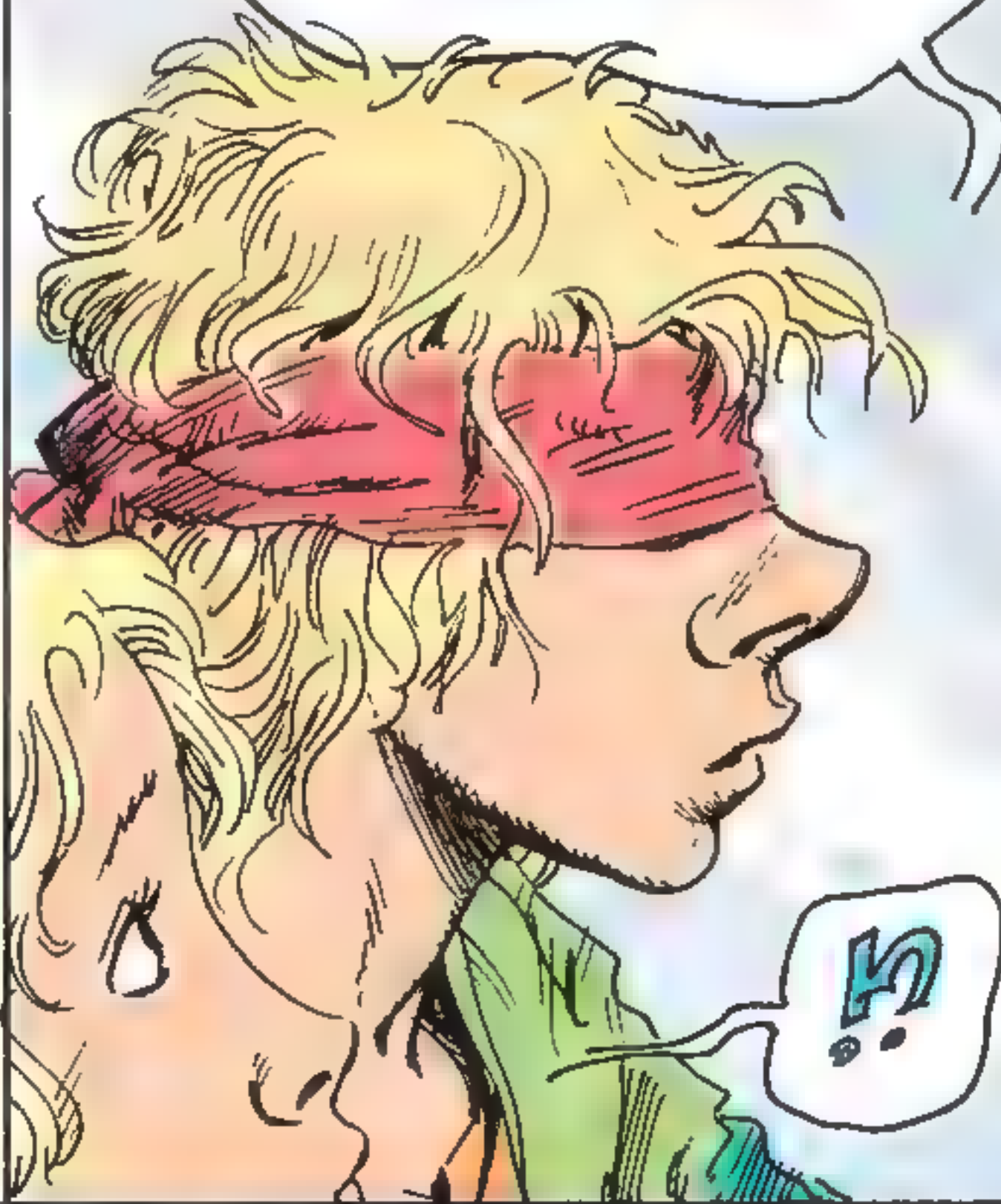


... AND MY FATHER SET THEM IN A PENDANT SO THAT I COULD WEAR THEM ON MY WEDDING DAY. DO YOU THINK THAT THESE PEARLS WOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE DREAM THORGAL HAD ON THE DAY OF MY BIRTH?

OF COURSE.



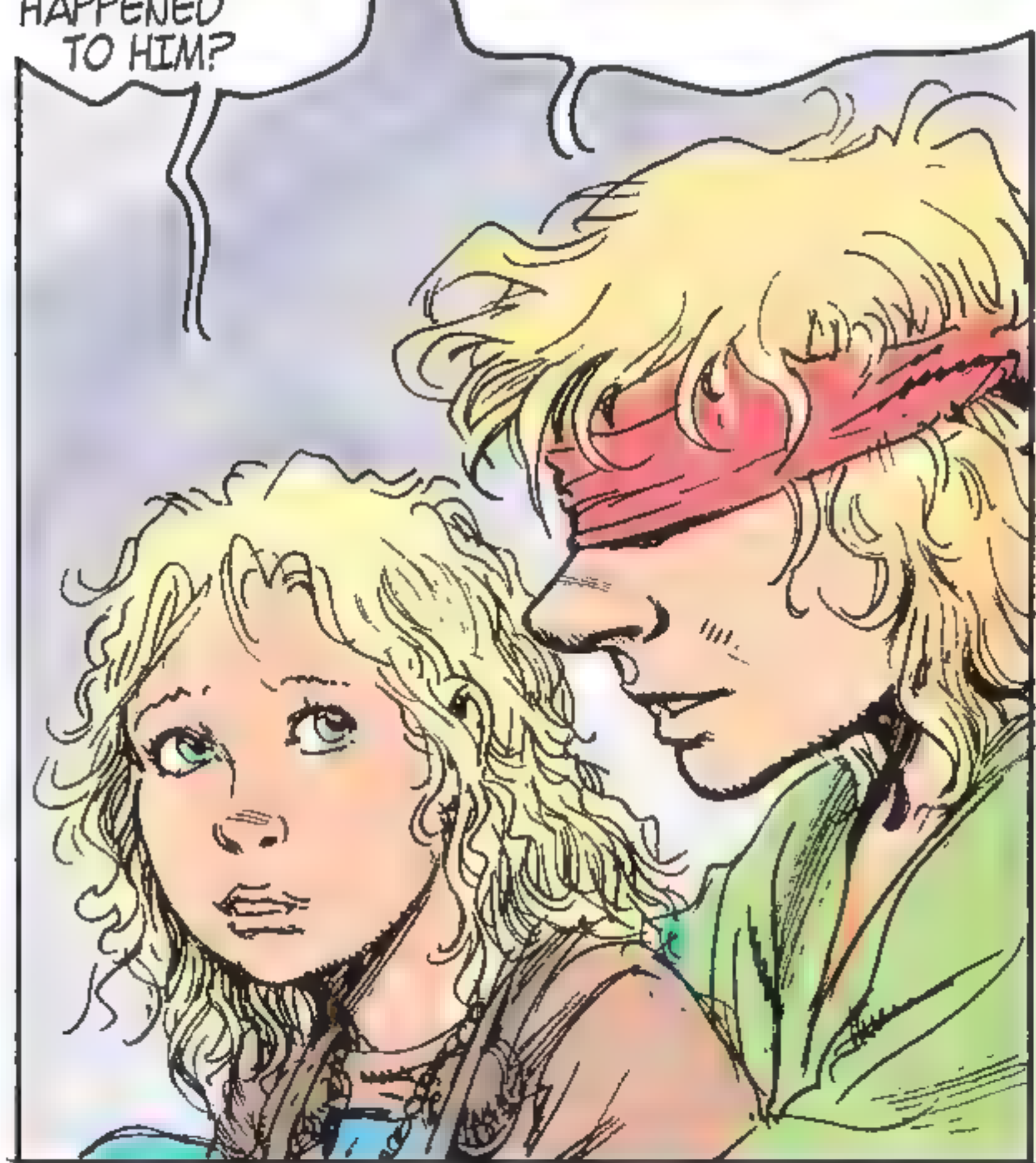
THE GREAT GODDESS FRIGG, ODIN'S WIFE, OFTEN TOLD US OF HOW IVALDI'S DWARVES HAD BEATEN THE SERPENT NIDHOGG, THANKS TO A YOUNG MORTAL WHO HAD GIVEN THEM A JEWEL MADE OF THE METAL THAT DOES NOT EXIST.



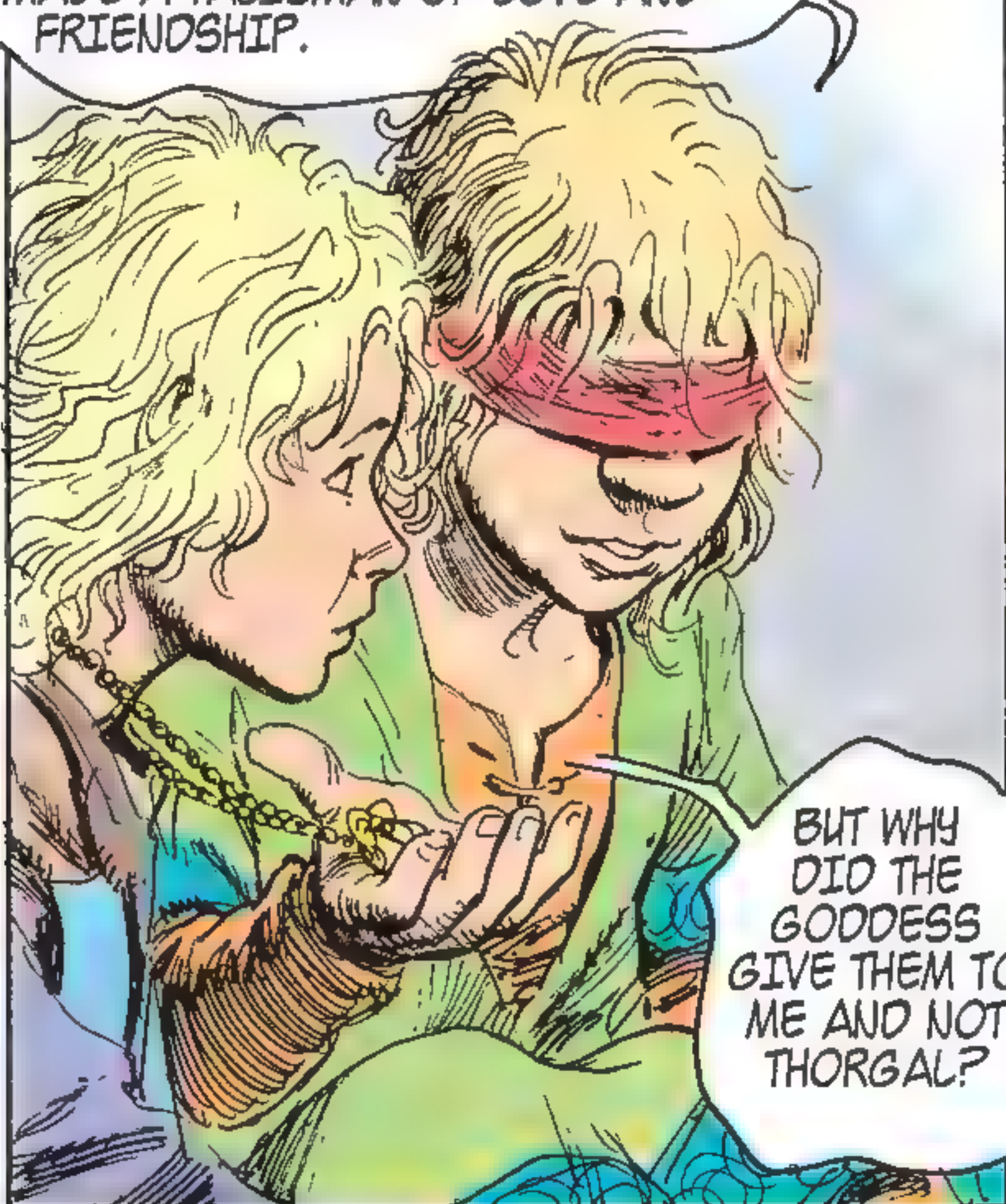
h?

YOU MEAN THAT THORGAL WASN'T DREAMING? THIS STORY REALLY HAPPENED TO HIM?

YES, BUT IN A WORLD TO WHICH ORDINARY MORTALS DON'T HAVE ACCESS. THAT'S WHY HIS MEMORIES FEEL LIKE DREAMS TO HIM.

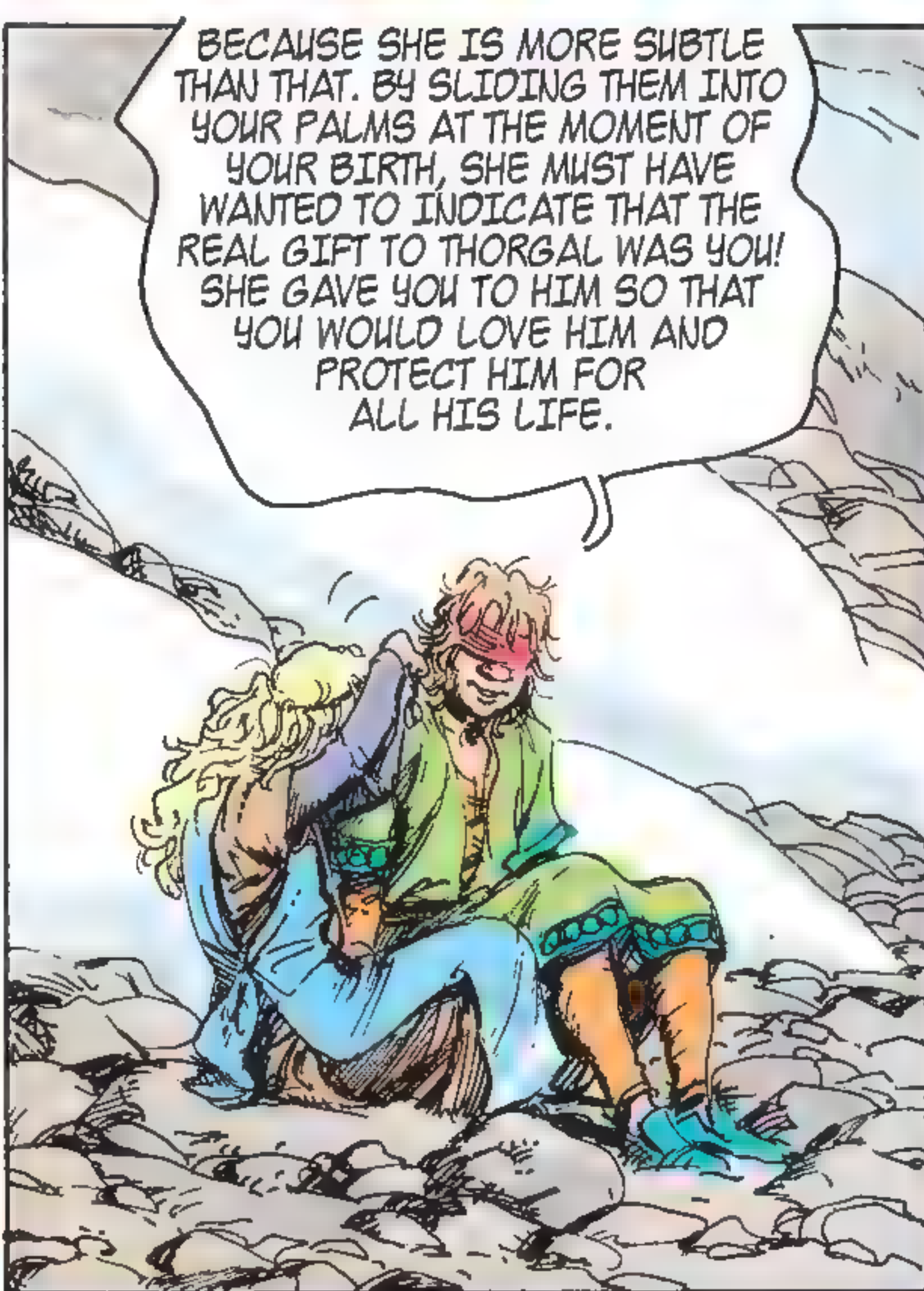


YOUR PEARLS ALSO COME FROM THIS WORLD, AARICIA. THESE ARE THE TEARS OF TJAHZI, OF WHICH FRIGG MADE A TALISMAN OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

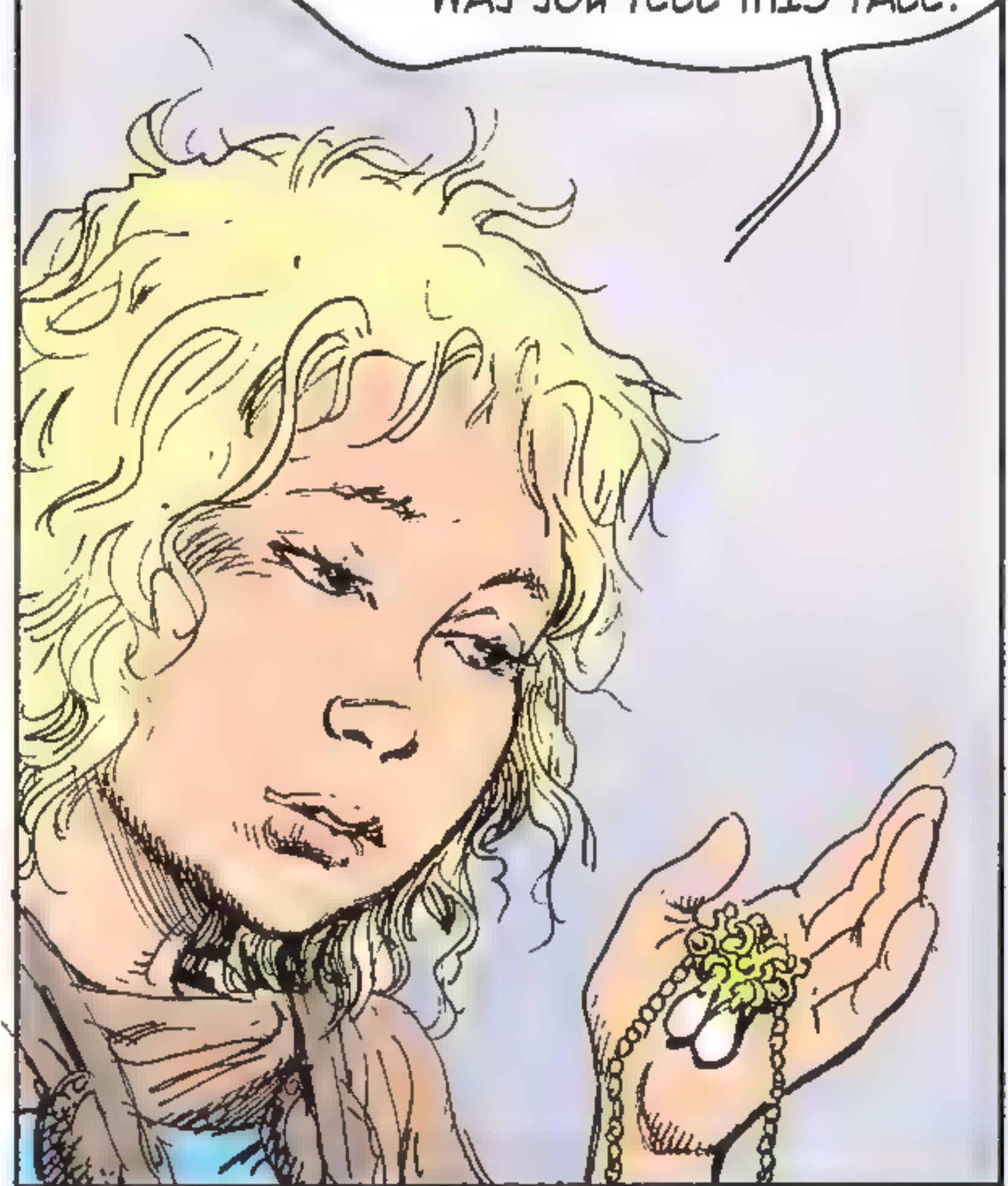


BUT WHY DID THE GODDESS GIVE THEM TO ME AND NOT THORGAL?

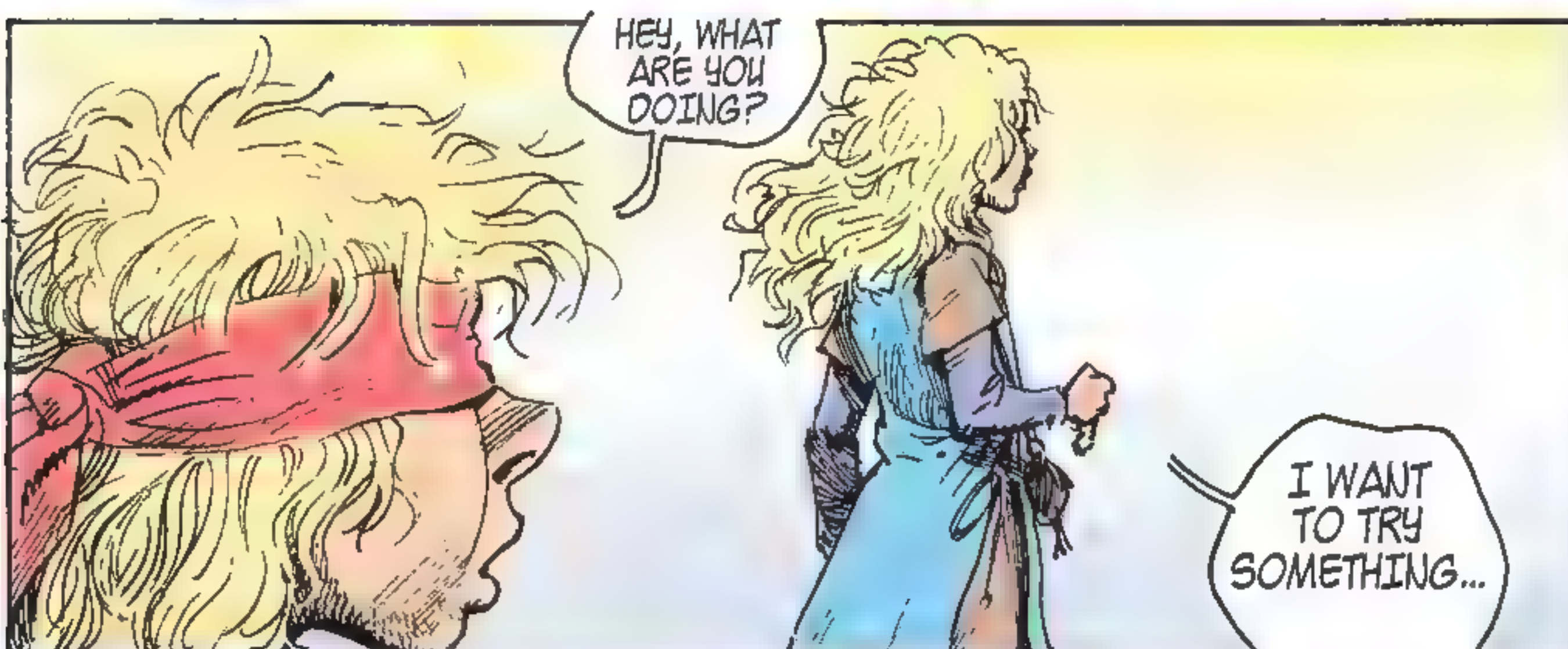
BECAUSE SHE IS MORE SUBTLE THAN THAT. BY SLIDING THEM INTO YOUR PALMS AT THE MOMENT OF YOUR BIRTH, SHE MUST HAVE WANTED TO INDICATE THAT THE REAL GIFT TO THORGAL WAS YOU! SHE GAVE YOU TO HIM SO THAT YOU WOULD LOVE HIM AND PROTECT HIM FOR ALL HIS LIFE.



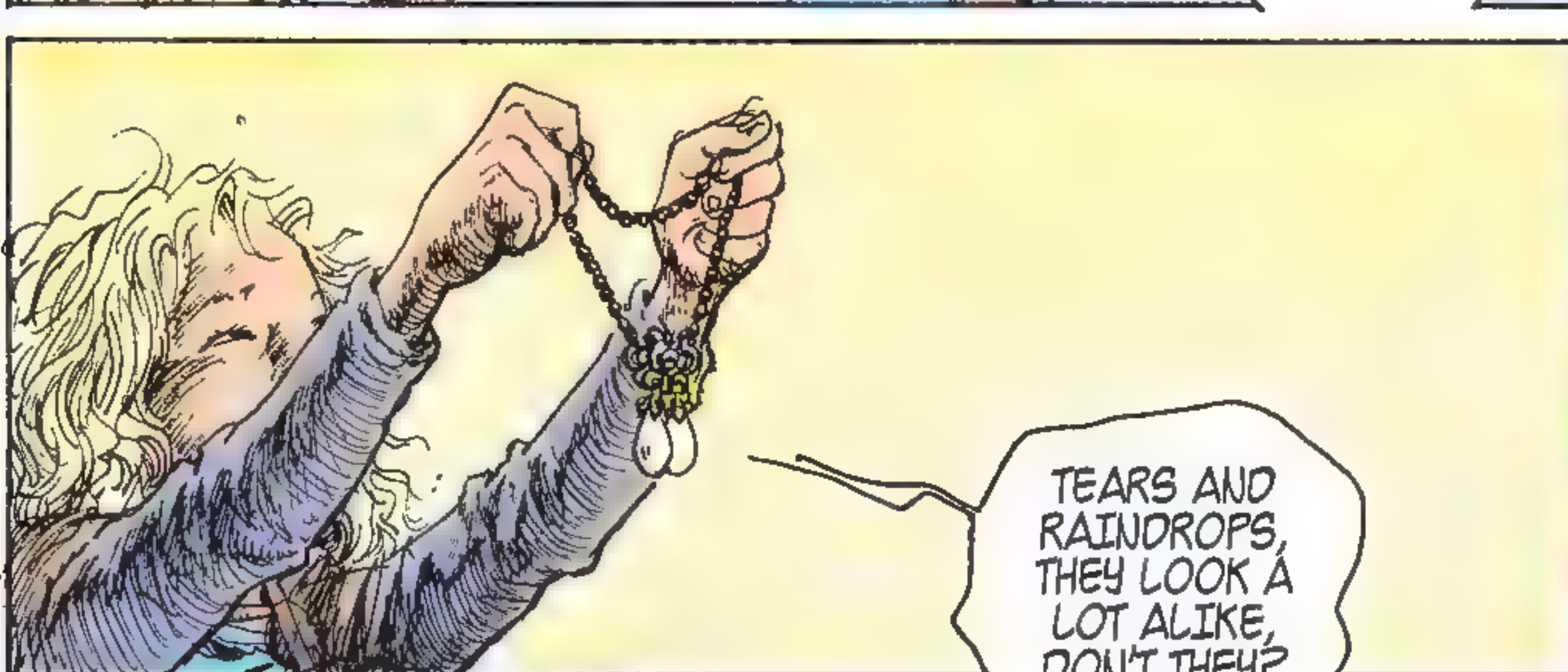
I DON'T KNOW IF YOUR INTERPRETATION IS RIGHT, VIGRID, BUT I DEFINITELY LIKE THE WAY YOU TELL THIS TALE.



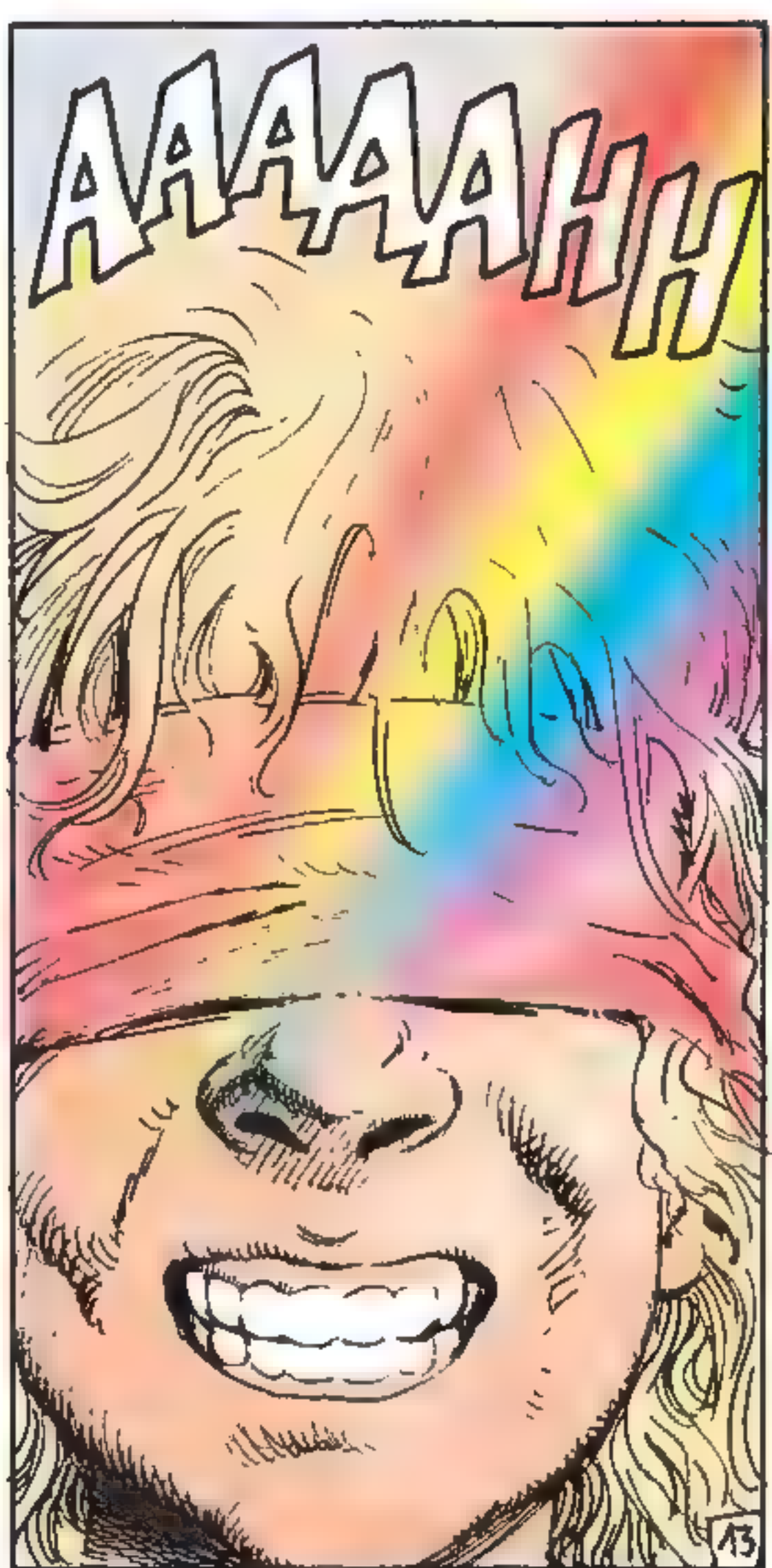
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

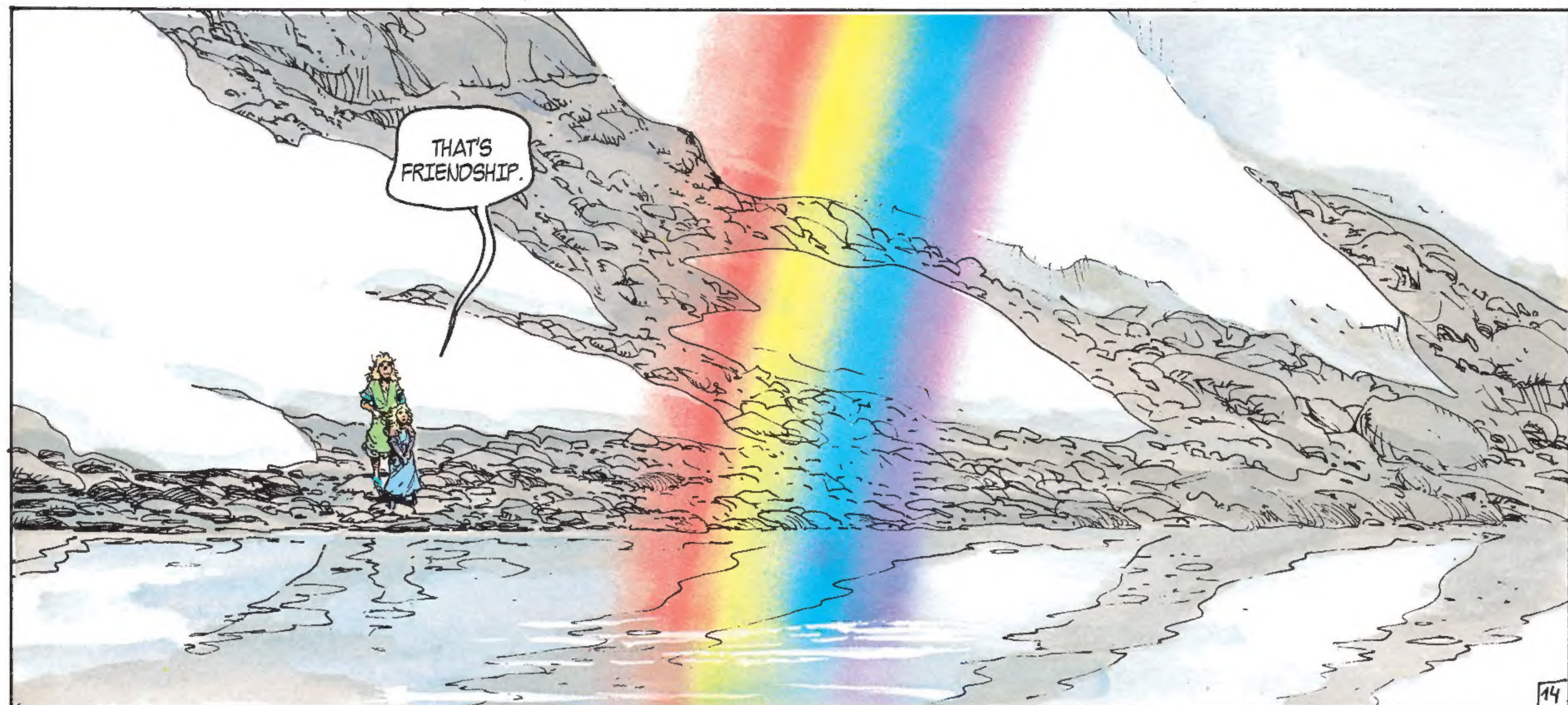
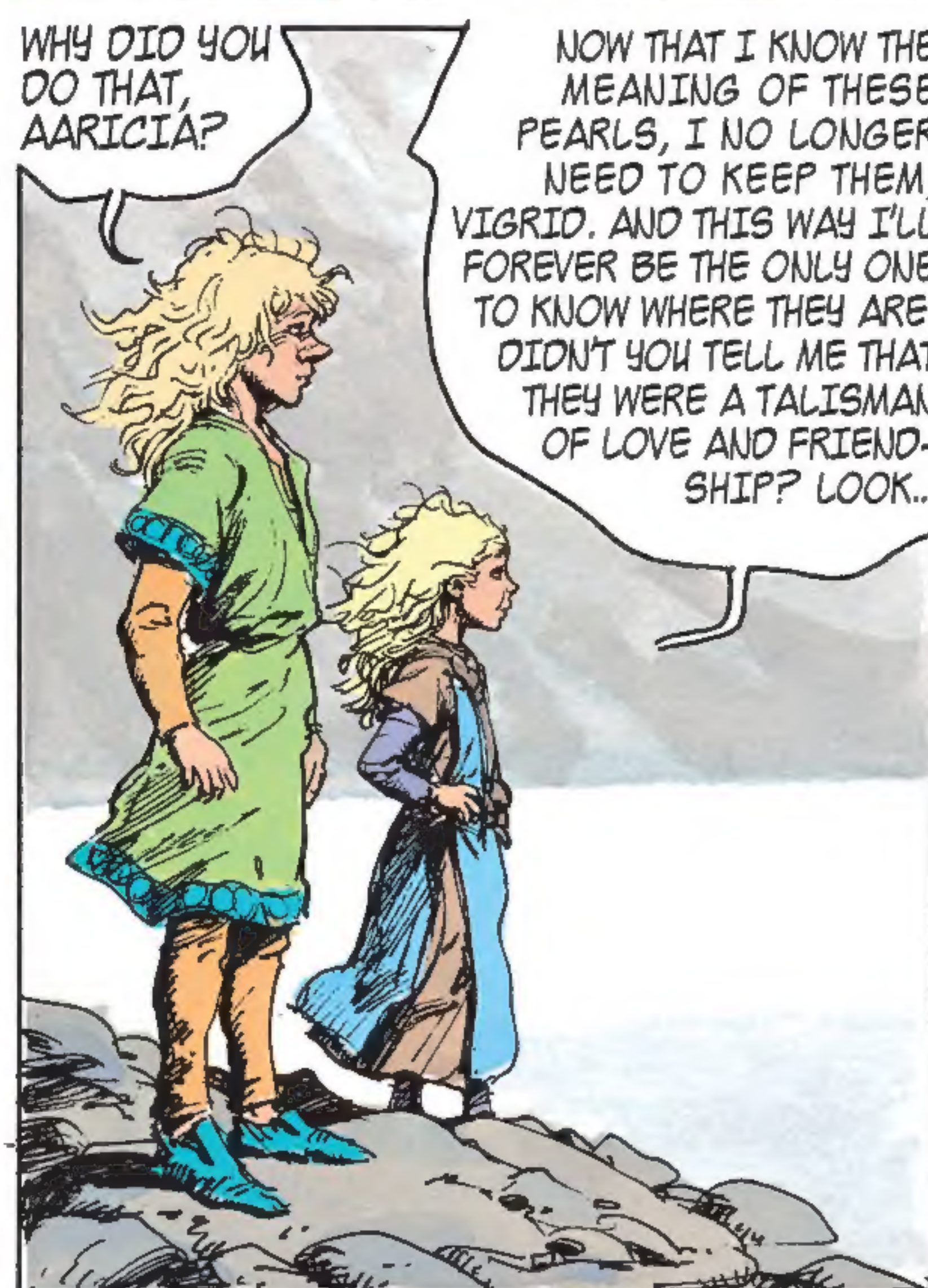
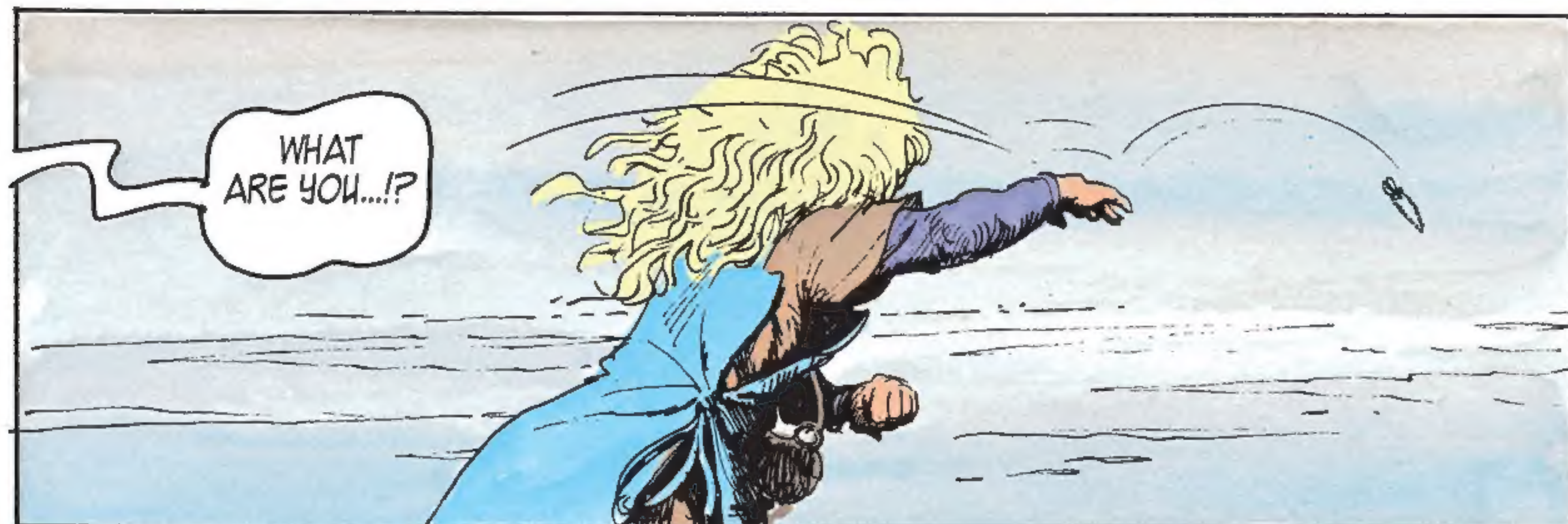
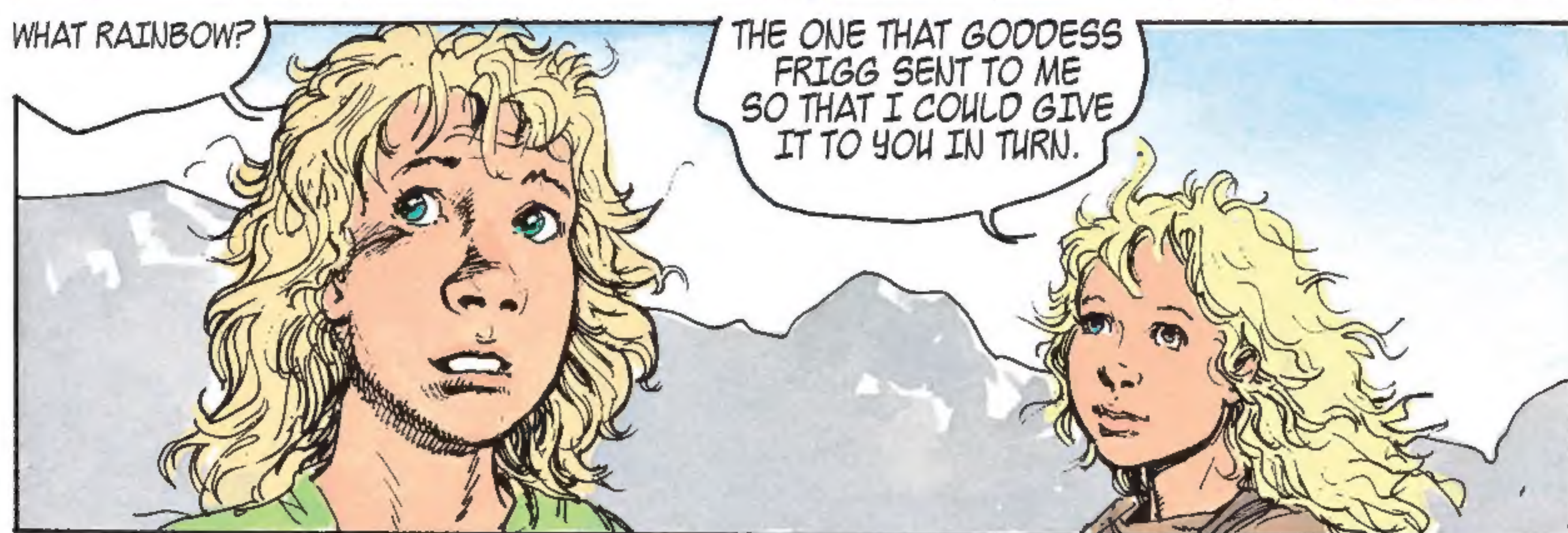
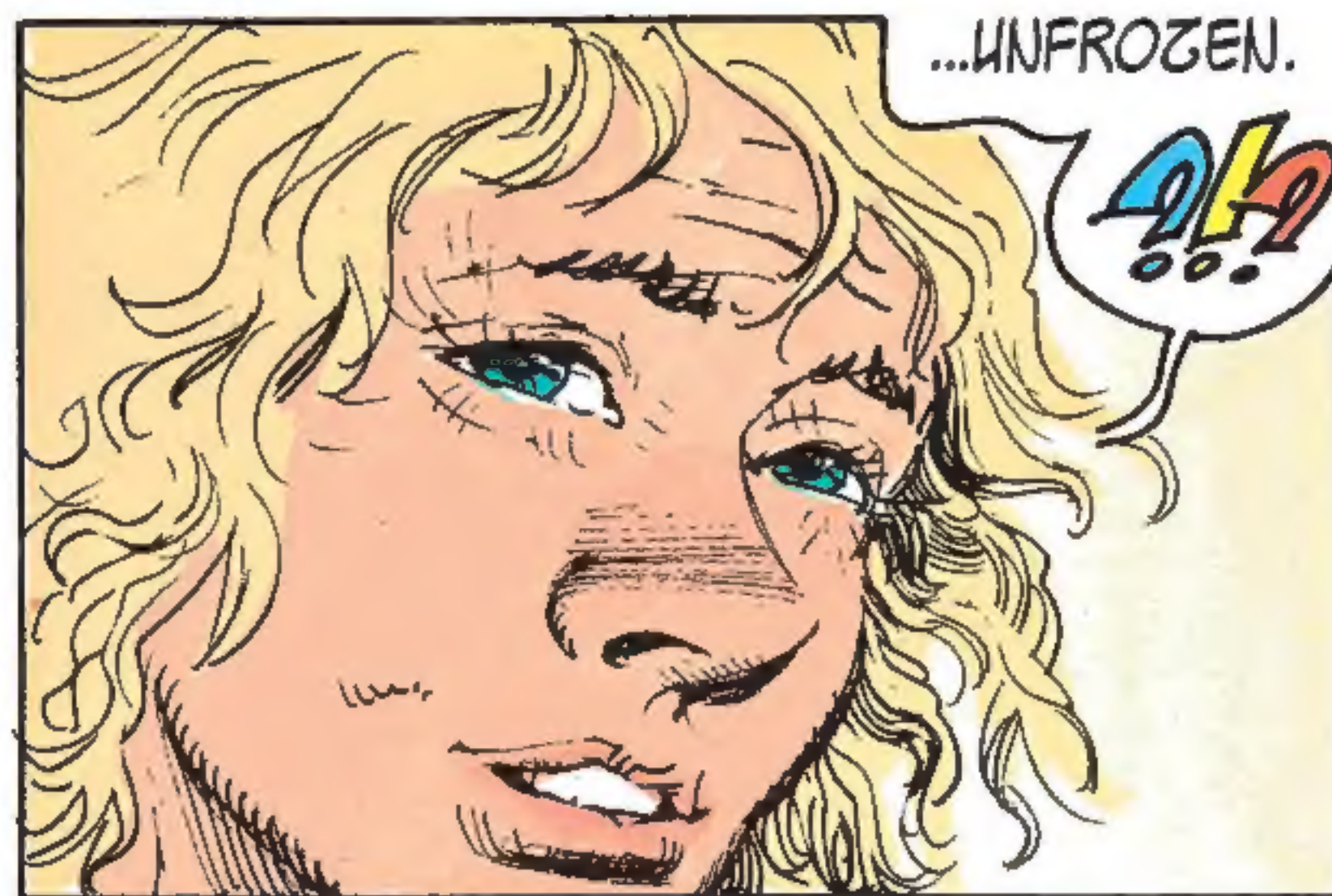
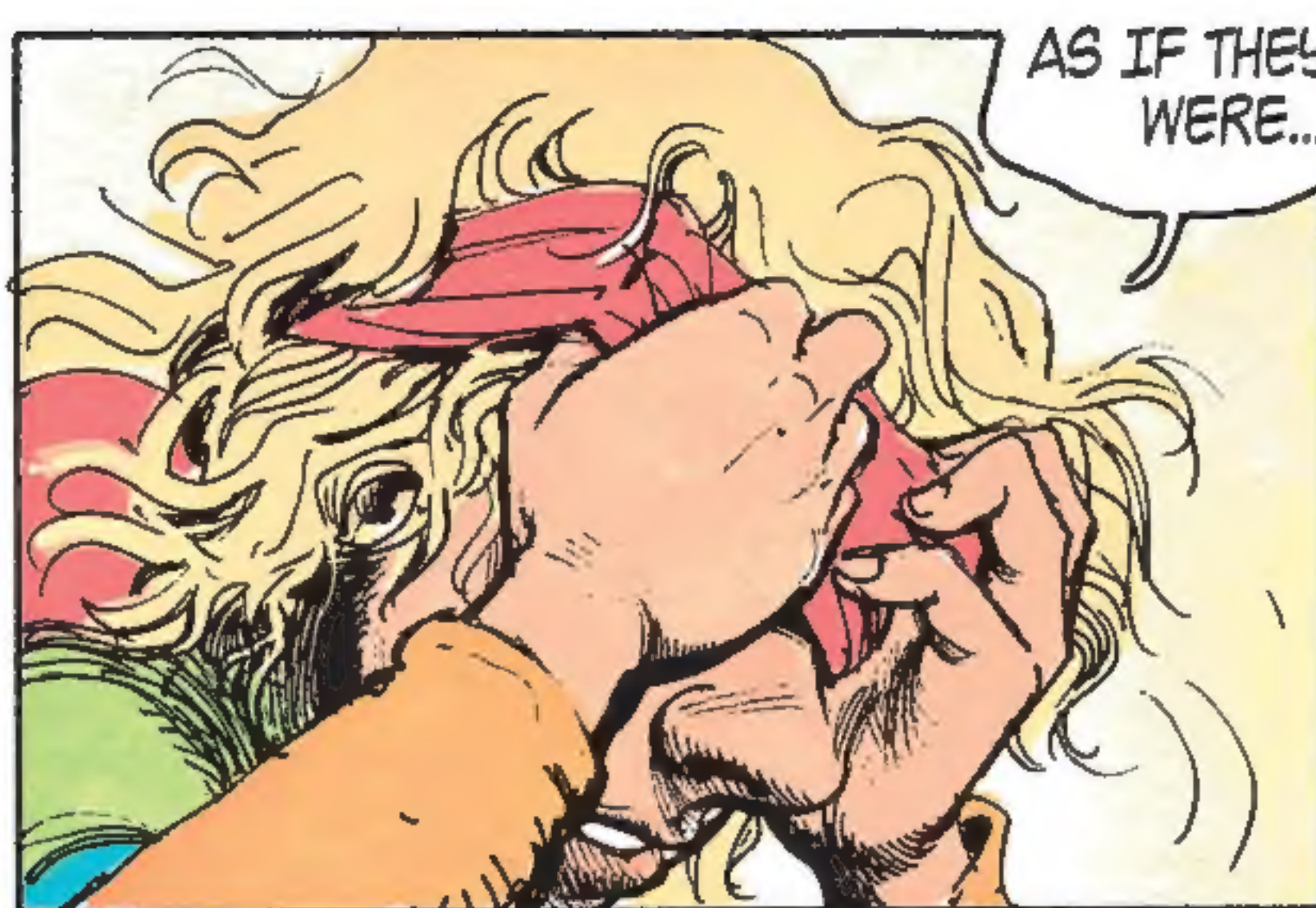


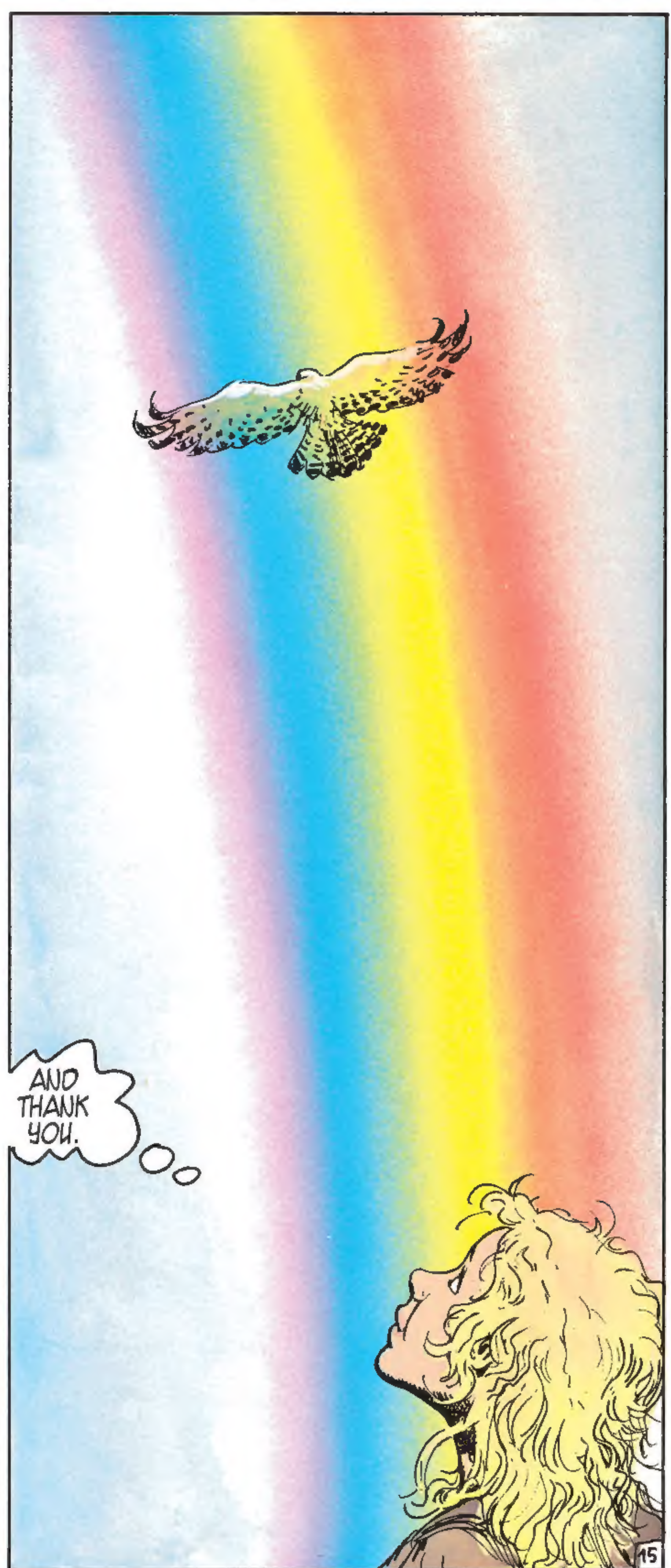
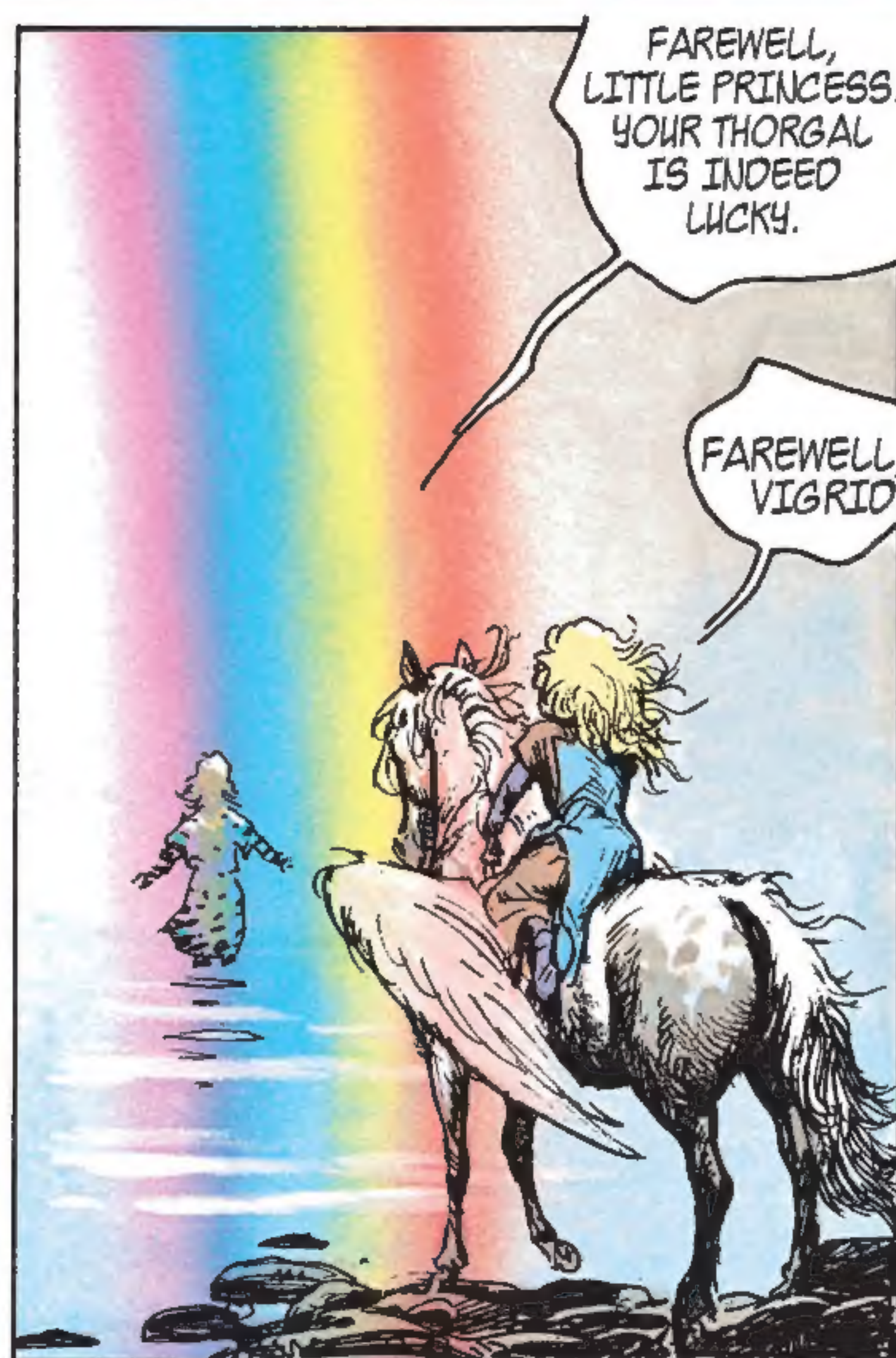
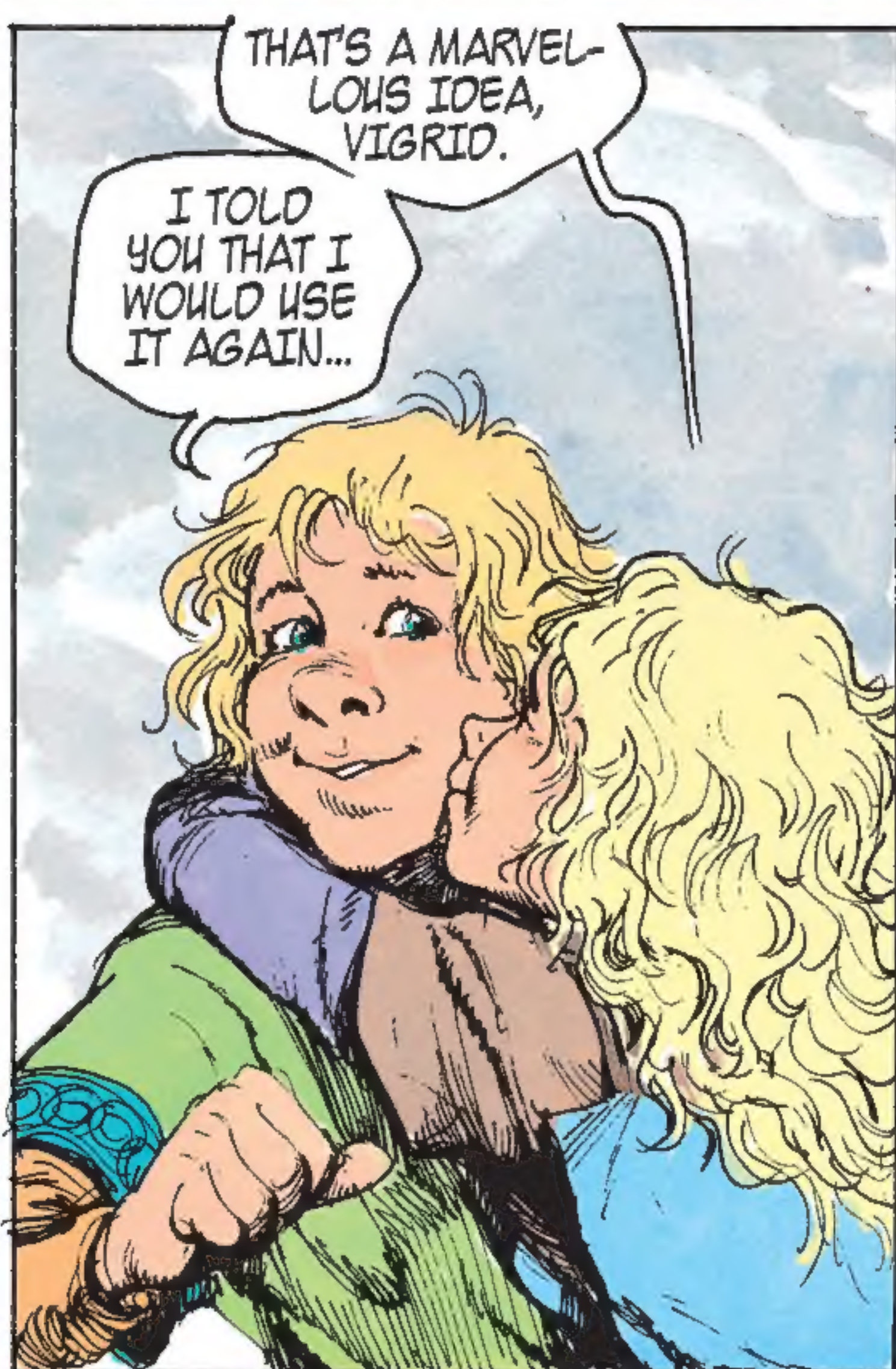
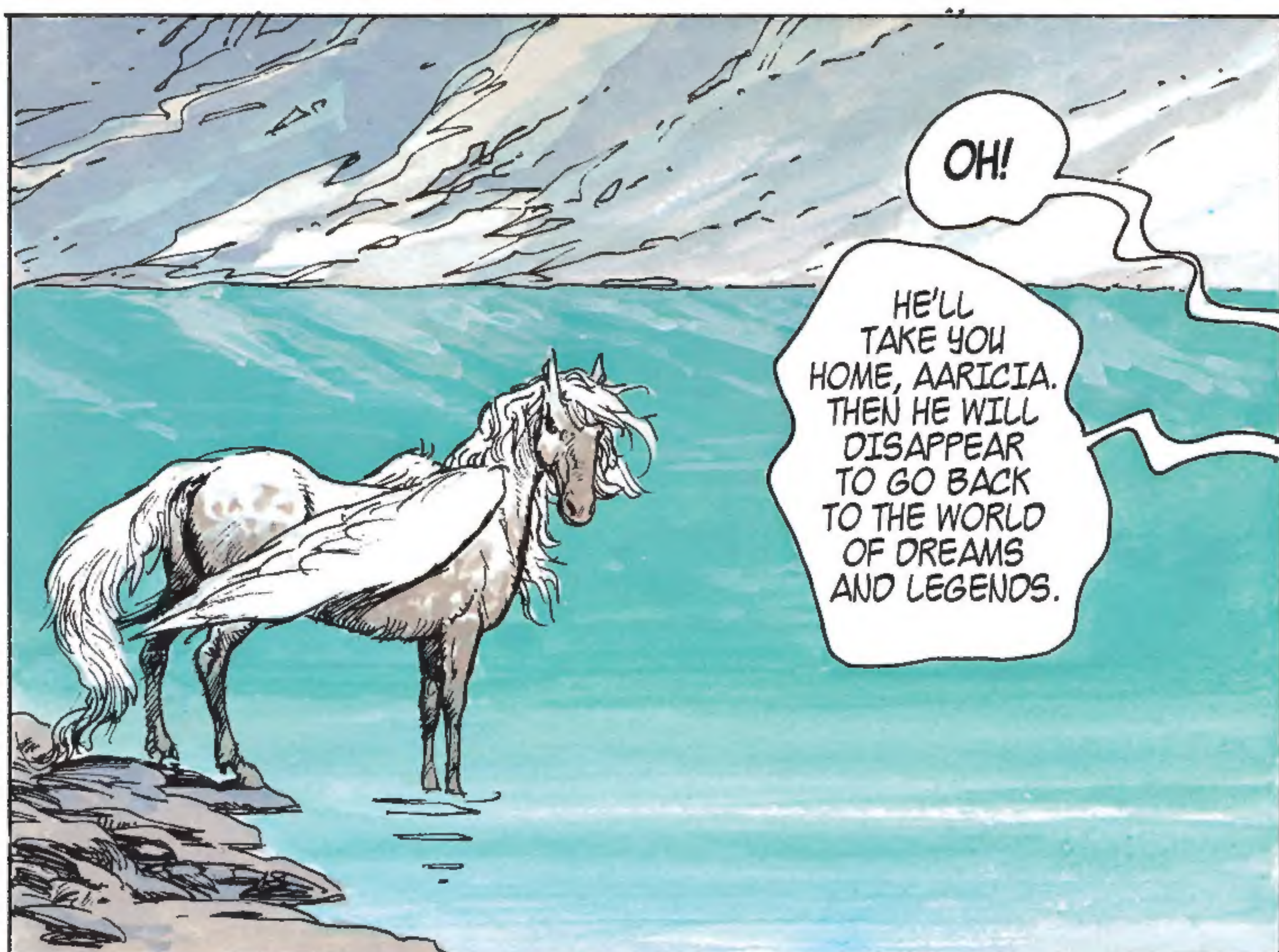
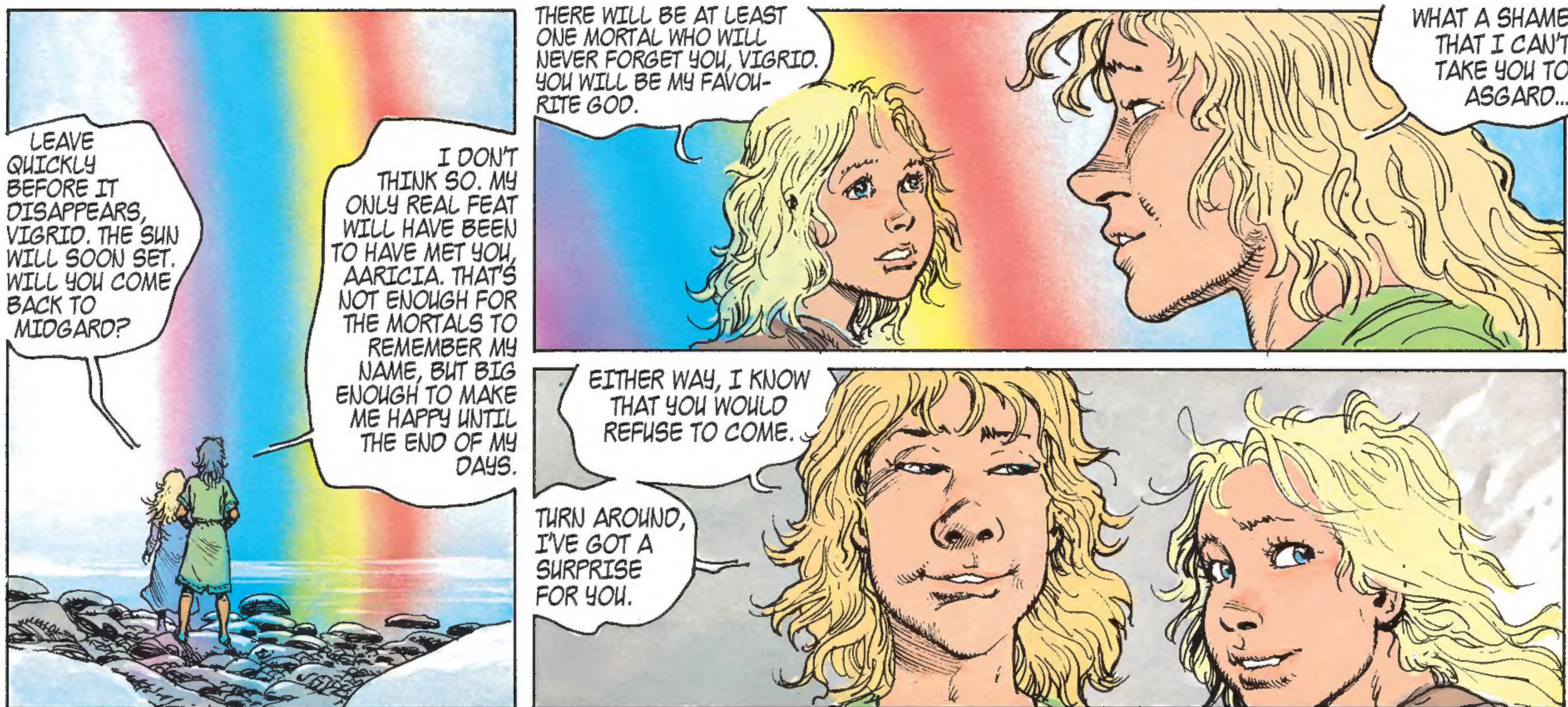
I WANT TO TRY SOMETHING...

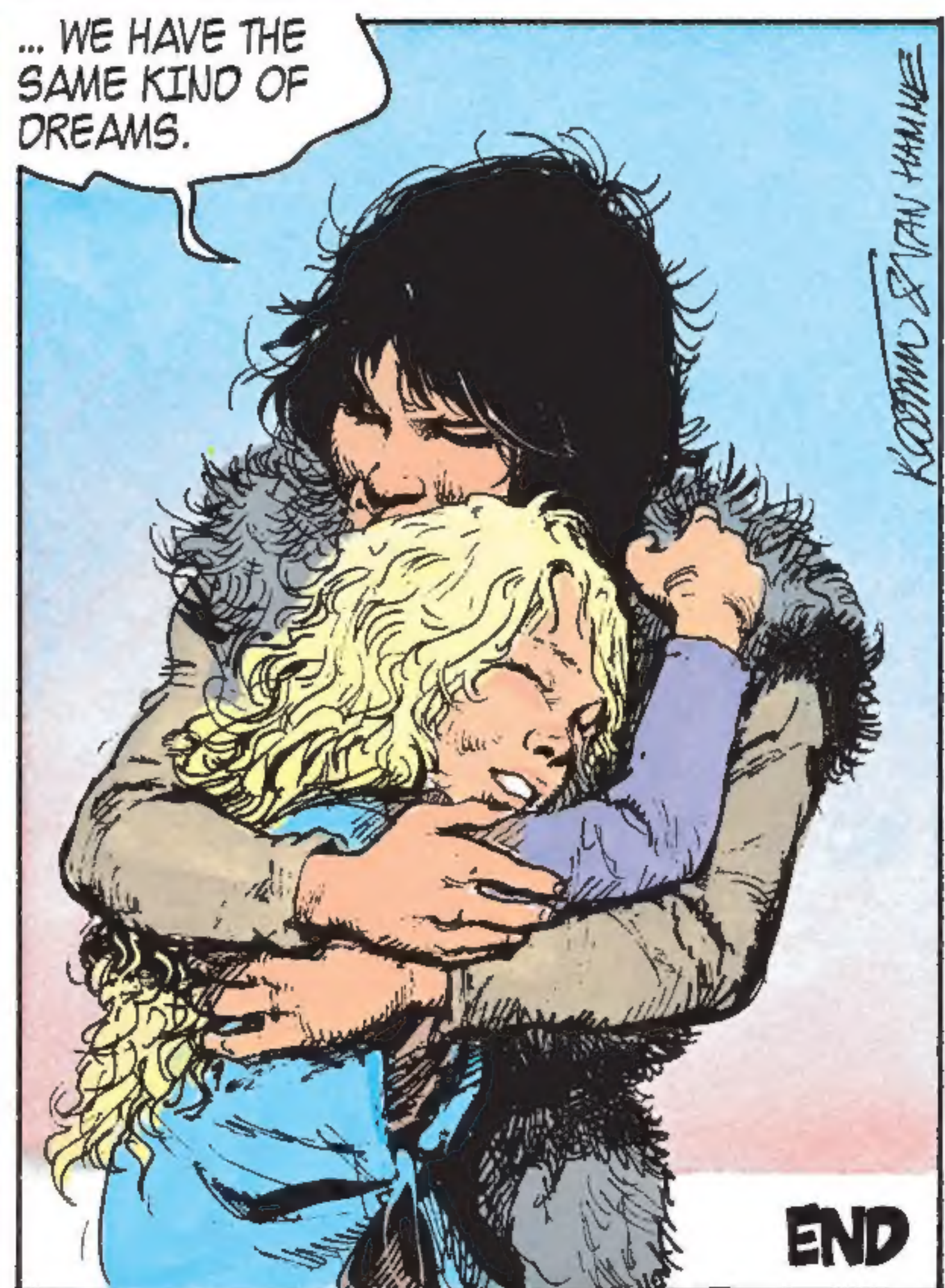
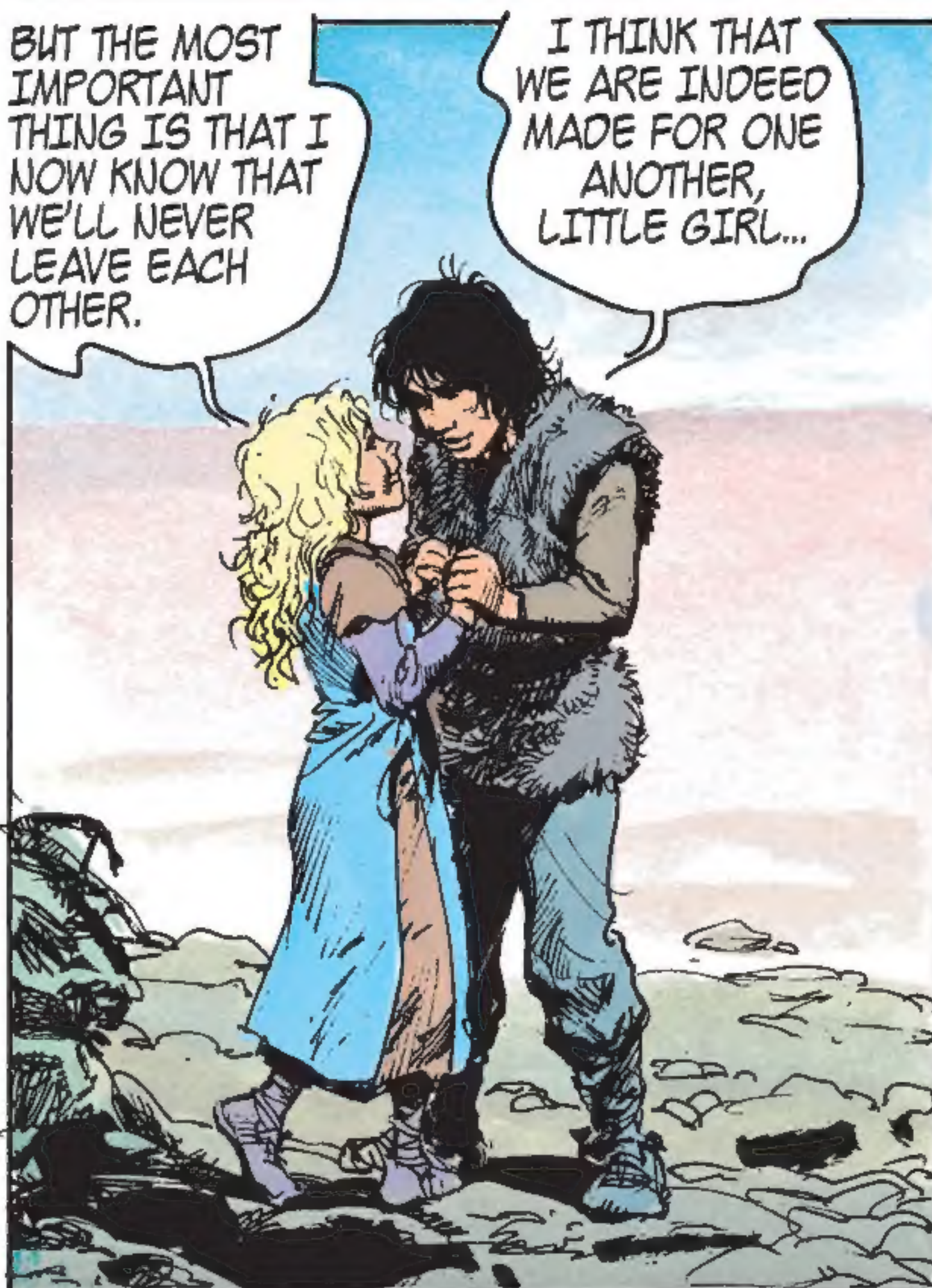
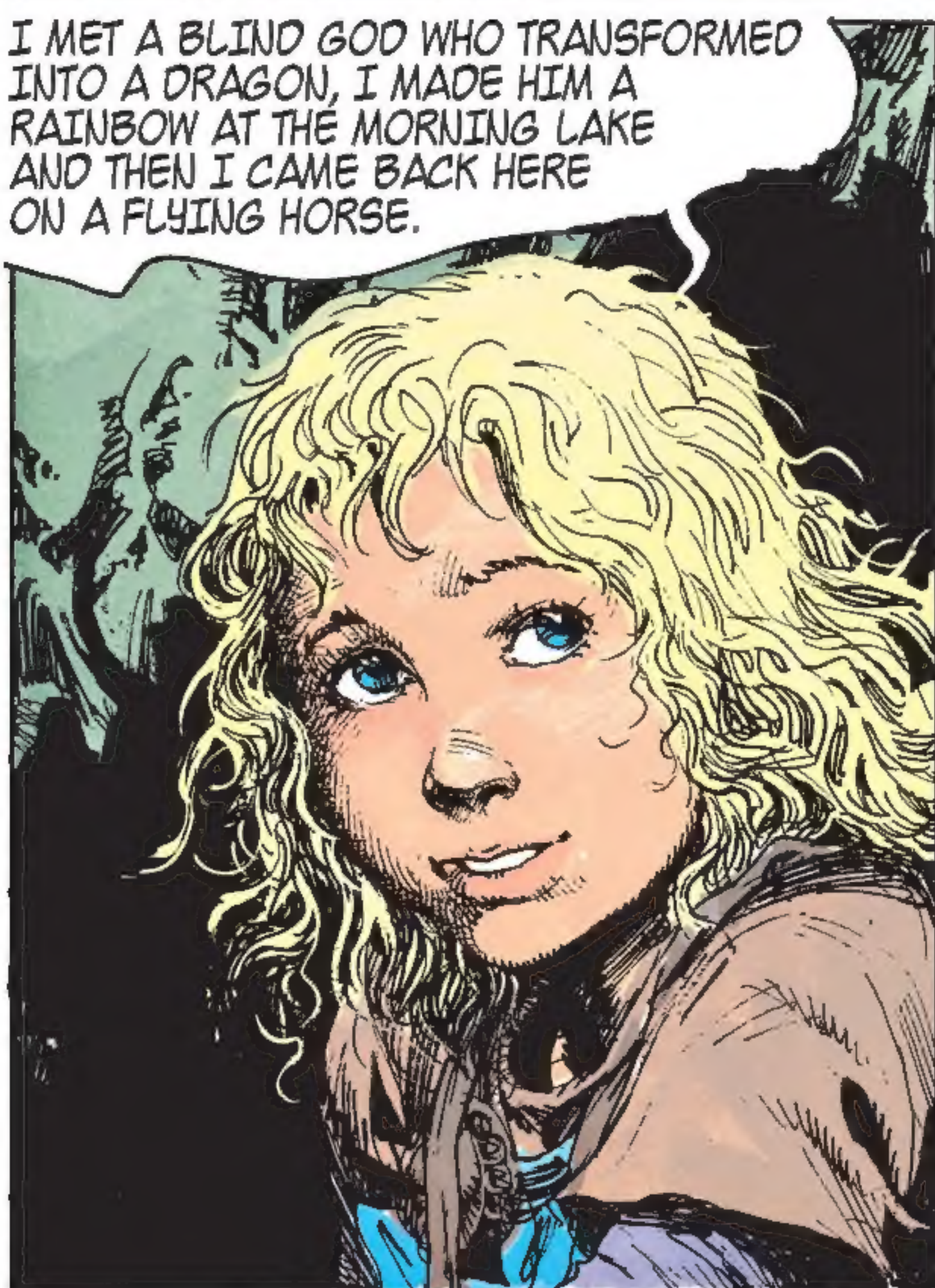
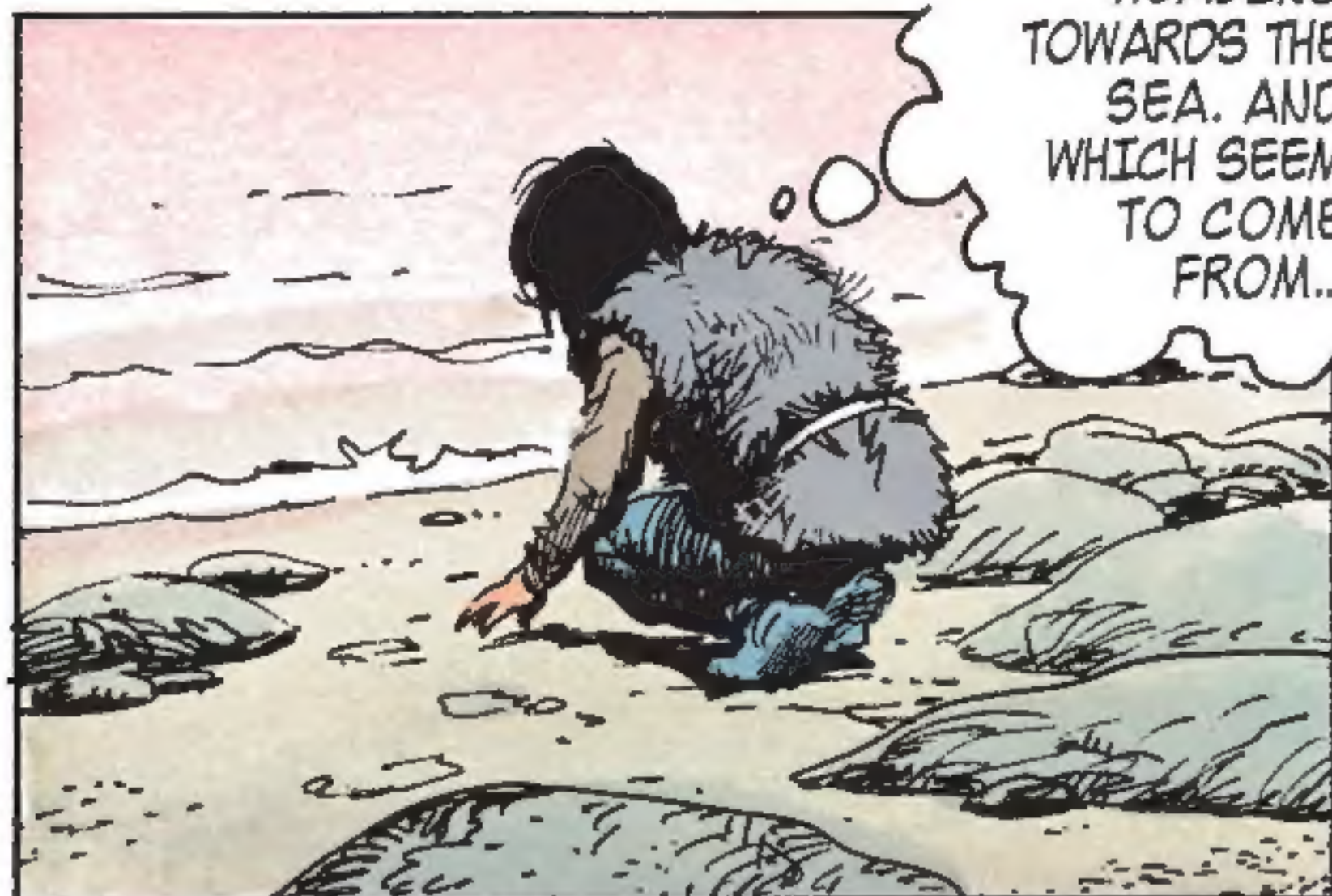
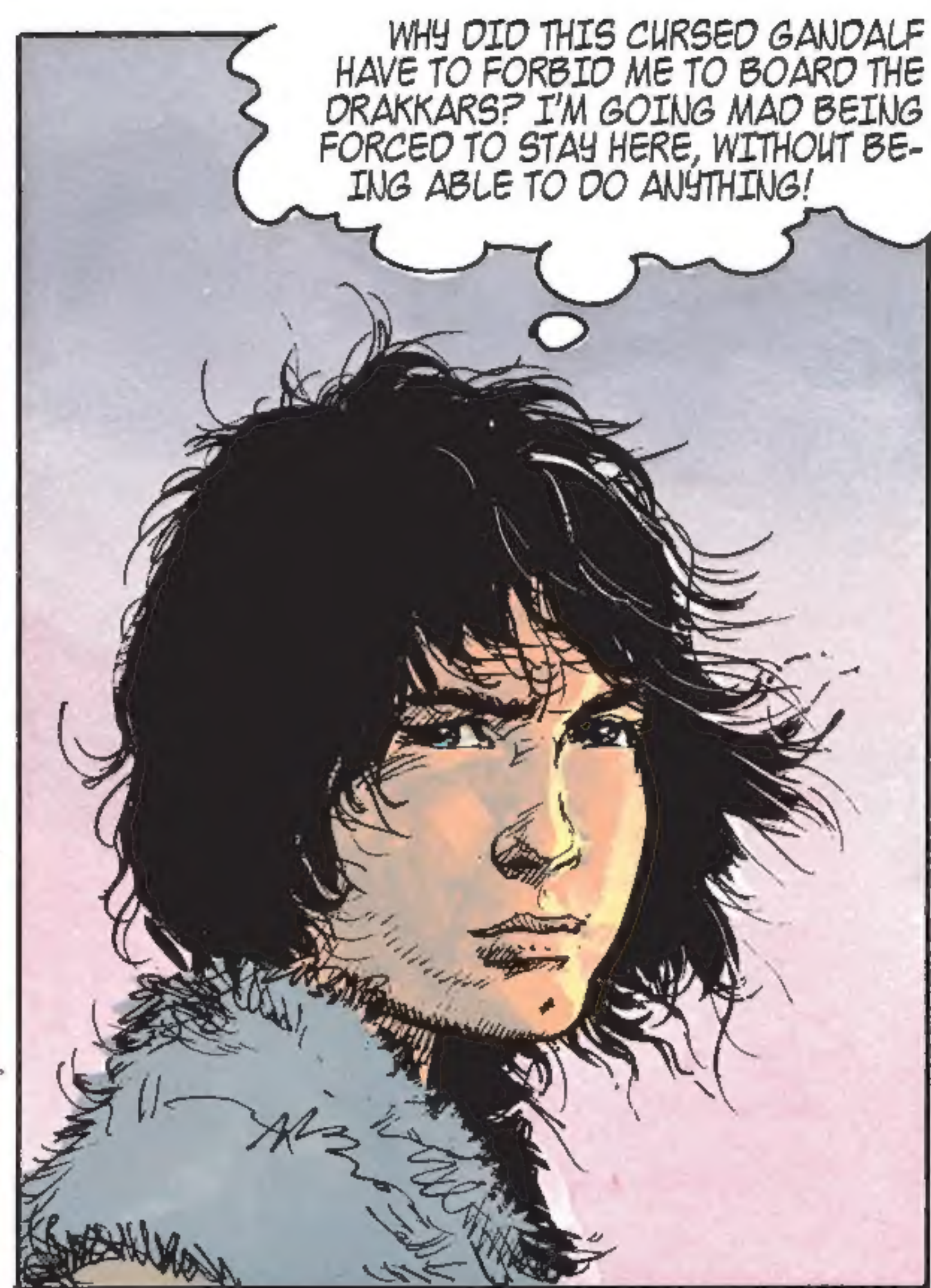
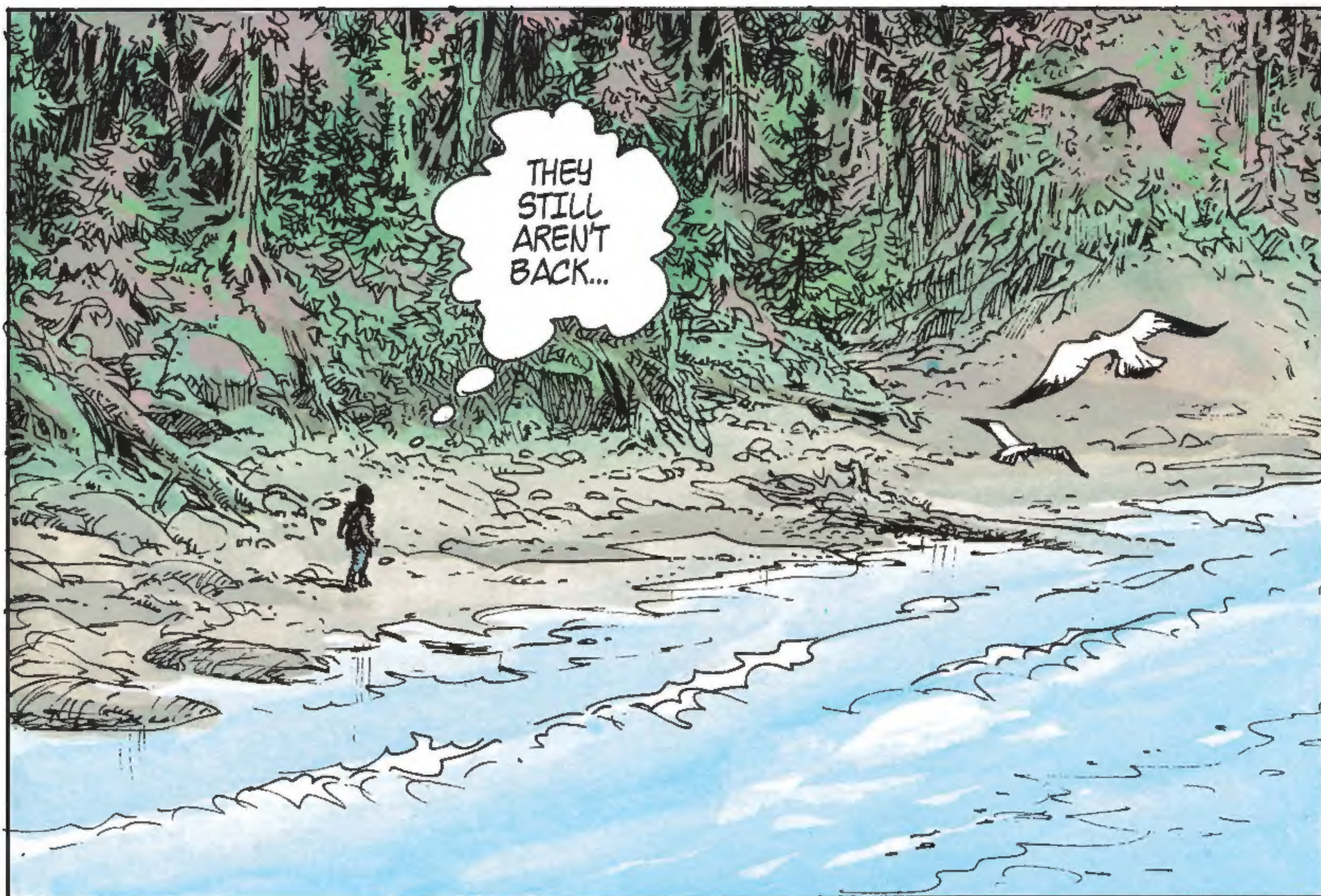


TEARS AND RAINDROPS, THEY LOOK A LOT ALIKE, DON'T THEY?









This two-volume book includes :

In the wild and inhospitable European far north, in the land of Scandinavian myths and runic legends, Viking warriors discover a child in a space capsule. Leif Haraldson adopts him and gives him the names of his gods: Thorgal Aegirsson, son of Thor (god of lightning) and son of Aegir (master of the sea). Upon Leif's death, the Viking chief Gandalf the Insane keeps Thorgal away from others. Only the friendship of Aaricia, the daughter of Gandalf, brightens up Thorgal's solitary childhood.

